MASSIVE BROADBAND ISP GUIDE – P130

Practical internet™

DYNAMITE!

NET SPEED TIPS THAT WILL BLOW YOU AWAY

- TURBOCHARGE YOUR NET ACCESS
- BOOST YOUR PC'S PERFORMANCE
- PICK THE RIGHT BROADBAND DEAL

p22

PLUS!

80 PAGES OF ADVICE

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FEATURES

- Why FTP is best for file-sharing
- Selling your business by email
- The best sites for cheap flights

WORKSHOPS

- Get free MP3 from Audiogalaxy
- Enjoy newsgroups with Agent
- Optimise graphics for the Web

WEB DESIGN

- Add a photo gallery to your site
- Protect your Web site's content
- Awesome design with GoLive 6

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PARAGON PUBLISHING
Issue 68

Will today be the day...

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RedHat Linux is the industry standard operating system for web hosting & Internet services, serving some of the world's largest & most complex web sites. RedHat Linux has the power, reliability & value for money you have been looking for.

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Celeron 800 MHz, 20GB UltraDMA Disk, 128MB SDRAM, 5GB Bandwidth p.m. RedHat Linux OS

Linux Professional
Intel Pentium III 866MHz, 1x40GB UltraDMA Disk, 256MB SDRAM, 15GB Bandwidth p.m. RedHat Linux OS

Linux Ultra II
Dual Intel Pentium III 1GHz, 2x18GB SCSI Disks running RAID1, 512MB SDRAM, 35GB Bandwidth p.m. RedHat Linux OS

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Windows Professional
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Single Site Professional
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5GB Bandwidth p.m.
Cobalt Linux OS

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20.4GB Disk
256MB SDRAM
15GB Bandwidth p.m.
Cobalt Linux OS

RAID RaQ 4 256
2x20GB Disks running RAID
256MB SDRAM
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Sun Netra X1 512

Sun Netra X1 System, 400MHz UltraSPARC-II CPU, 20GB 7200RPM EIDE Disk, 512MB Memory DIMMS, Solaris 8 Installed, 25GB Bandwidth p.m.

Sun Netra

Sun Netra T1 Server, 440MHz UltraSPARC-II CPU with 2MB External Cache, 18GB 10000RPM UltraSCSI Disk, 512MB Memory, Solaris 7 Installed, 35GB Bandwidth p.m.

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Locate your servers in our state of the art Data Centre. Simply choose between space for one server, a half rack or full rack of server space. We provide competitive bandwidth pricing, free reboots and an SLA.

Co-location Special

Rack space for your minitower or 19" rack server, 2 IP addresses, 5GB Bandwidth p.m.

Co-location Professional

Half rack/20 Us of 19" rack server space, 15 100Mb Switch Ports / 15 Power Sockets, up to 30 IP addresses, 40GB Bandwidth p.m.

Co-location Ultra

Full rack/40 Us of 19" rack server space, 23 100Mb Switch Ports / 23 Power Sockets, up to 60 IP addresses, 65GB Bandwidth p.m.

PLUS PACKAGE

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For a **complete** solution to your Web hosting requirements, consider the benefits of adding the **Plus** package to your Dedicated Server. Available across all our Dedicated Servers, the **Plus** package offers outstanding value for money and total peace of mind:

Firewall
The Dedicated Servers Firewall product allows customers to protect their machine against unwanted visitors. Via a web based control panel, you have the ability to allow or deny visitors based on rules that you set. You can add any number of rules that you wish to your Firewall system.

Backup
An important decision when choosing your Dedicated Server is considering how you will back up the data on your new machine. Even though we use the best hardware that is available for all our servers, disks can occasionally fail, and in some cases the data on them may be lost. We strongly recommend our backup solutions using StorageTek tape libraries. This service includes: configuration of server side backup routine, 10GB of backup, tapes stored securely on site in a large fireproof safe, and free recovery of data in the event of data loss.

Advanced server monitoring
For customers who require a more advanced level of server monitoring, upgrade to our Advanced Server Management product. This product allows you to monitor any number of services on your server including: Telnet, POP3 EMail, Web Server, FTP Server, Domain Name Server, Secure Web Server, SSH, Ping. You may also configure any number of additional services and decide how you want to be notified of a service failure, either EMail or SMS. Control this account feature in your Dedicated Control Panel.

Available as standard with all our Dedicated Servers is our guranteed Service Level Agreement (SLA).

We pride ourselves on the highest levels of customer service & quality assurance, which is highlighted in four benefits of our SLA:

30 Minute Reboot Guarantee
Should your server stop responding, just visit our web based reboot request form to get your server rebooted, within 30 minutes, 24/7, 365 days a year.

99% Connectivity - Money Back Guarantee
We guarantee that our network will be available at least 99% of the time.

Prices Frozen - Forever!
We guarantee never to put your prices up, ever, even if prices change for new customers.

Bandwidth Guarantee
Unlike some of our competitors, we do not oversell bandwidth. At Dedicated Servers we guarantee that we have 1:1 contention ratio on bandwidth. This means that we will always have enough bandwidth to service every single customer at their full capacity.

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NEW
Linux Web Servers
Host Windows and Linux Domains on the same account.

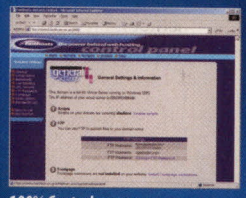
host unlimited domains

FREE INSTANT SET UP
£50 PER MONTH or £500 PA

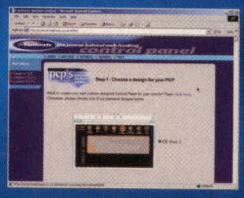
WARNING
A DEDICATED SERVER CAN SERIOUSLY LIMIT YOUR BUSINESS

HOSTING BEYOND LIMITS

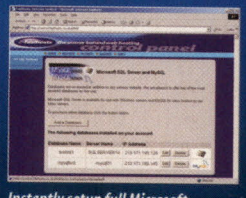
HOST UNLIMITED DOMAINS USING YOUR OWN WEB BASED CONTROL PANEL



100% Control over your domain names



Setup private label control panels for your customers that control just one of your domain names



Instantly setup full Microsoft SQL Server and MYSQL Databases

Reseller Account

Why buy a cheap dedicated server when you can host unlimited domain names with maximum flexibility with the Fasthosts Reseller account?

Benefits of the Reseller Account include:

- Manage both Windows 2000 domains and Linux domains on the same account.
- Your domains split across multiple high-performance web-servers for ultimate reliability.
- Innovative new features such as e-mail Virus Scanning and Matrix Stats being added all the time.
- Round the clock monitoring and management of all services by systems engineers and programmers.

A true 'data-centre-in-a-box' solution, the Reseller Account allows you to host unlimited websites on both Windows 2000 and Linux web-servers.

Using a powerful web-based control panel you can instantly setup and manage new websites, e-mail accounts, FTP accounts, databases and more!

Ideal for Web designers, resellers and entrepreneurs, the Fasthosts Reseller Account is the best solution for managing multiple domain names from one easy to use web based control panel.

Features

- Windows 2000 Web Servers
- **New** Redhat Linux Web Servers
- Full Support for Microsoft ASP
- Microsoft Frontpage Extensions
- Support for Perl
- Private CGI-BIN with execute permissions for each domain
- **New** Preconfigured web scripts installable at the click of a button
- Matrix Stats – the most advanced website traffic analysis software providing real-time information about your site visitors
- E-mail virus protection
- Microsoft Media Streaming
- Password protected areas on your site with authentication from a text file or database
- Setup private label control panels for your customers
- Microsoft SQL and MYSQL Databases
- ODBC Database Connectivity
- Control Everything via our powerful web based control panel
- Instant Online Setup
- Fasthosts Xtreme Support included as standard

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Xtreme SUPPORT

OBSESSIVE TECHNICIANS LOOKING AFTER YOU 24 HOURS A DAY

NEW MATRIXSTATS

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Welcome

MEET THE REGULARS AT THE PRACTICAL INTERNET ARMS

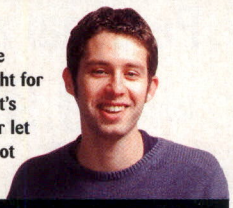
Thomas Watson

TECHNICAL EDITOR

Thomas spends so much time on the oche he's started hallucinating dartboards. But thanks to his delivery, our very own Jockey Wilson always hits the target

James Thornton

STAFF WRITER



When pub sports are on the agenda, James heads straight for the green baize, but when it's time for work, he will never let the *PI* news section go to pot

Jo Cole

SENIOR SUB EDITOR

The life and soul of the party, Jo's the pub landlady who's never afraid to call 'Time gentleman please!' when the magazine has to go to the printers

Paul Blachford

SENIOR DESIGNER

With so few traditional boozers left, it's down to design experts like Paul to ensure the pub attracts new customers without turning into a pink wine bar

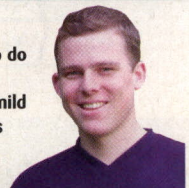
Clive Parker

NET TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

There won't be any trouble with beefy Clive Parker guarding the door. Internet problems are left outside in the gutter, where they belong

James Seabright

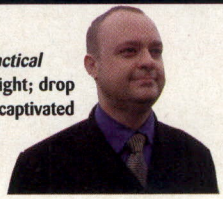
WEB SITE DESIGN SPECIALIST



Web mechanic James is happy to do up the locals' Web sites free of charge, just fetch him a pint of mild and a packet of pork scratchings and watch him go

Chris Ellison

COLUMNIST



Wednesday night in the *Practical Internet* Arms is acoustic night; drop by and you'll find the locals captivated by Chris's protest songs of freedom and injustice

Broadband Britain has barely learned to walk, but already ISPs are tossing their toys out of the pram. The current moan from ADSL providers, most notably Freeserve, is that BTopenworld is privy to inside information from BT wholesale and therefore has an unfair advantage over the rest of the crèche. There are also grumbles that BT's new 'no frills' broadband product (see News, page 10), amounts to nothing more than a slap in the face with a wet modem.

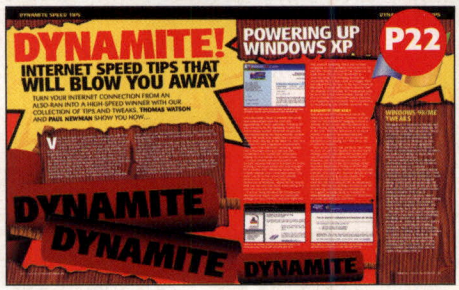
So should we, as consumers, be worried about all this mud slinging? In short, no.

As long as ISPs argue among themselves and battle it out for market supremacy the only winner will be Internet users. If Freeserve really wanted to grab the attention of broadband thirsty punters and all the headlines, why doesn't it just undercut BTopenworld's price of £29.99 a month instead of matching it and moaning? After all, it was this self-same tactic that allowed Freeserve to steal a march on BTopenworld in the unmetered market in the first place. Besides, some would suggest that Freeserve's connection with Dixons and PC World has given the firm a high street presence that more than compensates for any perceived injustice anyway.

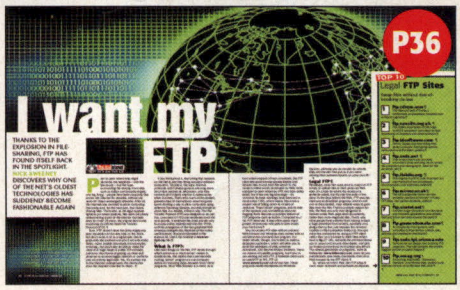
The broadband revolution may still be in its infancy, but this is one story that will run and run – more price cuts and fatter pipes are sure to follow, along with the inevitable ISP spats. Long live the revolution!

Paul Newman, Editor
pauln@paragon.co.uk

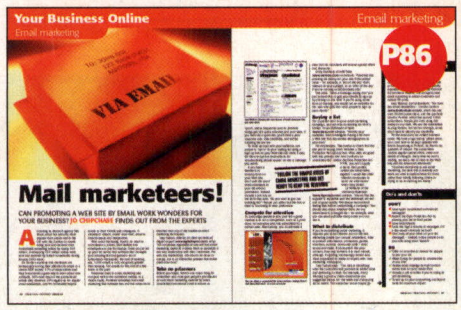
Inside this issue of *Practical Internet*



Supercharge your Net access with our guide to tweaking Windows, upgrading your PC hardware and getting a faster connection



Journey into the Internet underground with our guide to the archaic but highly rewarding world of FTP



Set up the perfect email marketing camping to generate customers and revenue for your business – we show you how

Adobe releases the latest version of GoLive – we put it through its paces and tell you whether to splash the cash or not

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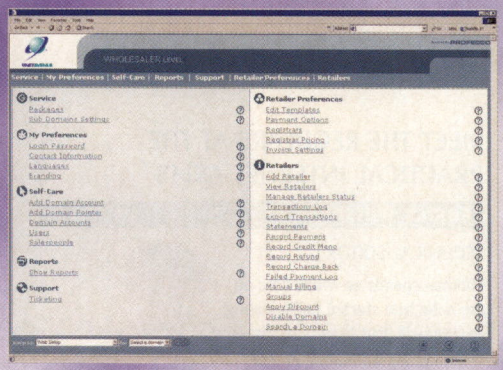
- Host unlimited number of domains!
- Let your customers manage their accounts with YOUR own private label Control Panel
- Set-up your own merchant account and accept payments online immediately
- Invoice and credit manage your customers with built-in accounts & collection functions
- Purchase and sell additional 9Net services online as you require, i.e. SSL, SQL, etc.
- Provide hourly updated stats for all your customers domains



9Net Account Control Panel extensive feature list.

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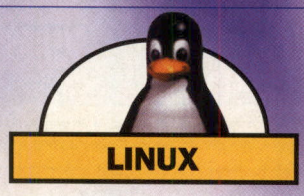
- Windows 2000 servers running IIS 5
- MS SQL, MySQL servers
- Free phone 24/7 Tech Support
- Instant account set-up
- Full ASP3 support
- Free Frontpage extensions on Win2K or Linux servers
- Service Level Agreement with 99.5% uptime guarantee
- 30 day money back guarantee

Personal accounts from £9.95 per month

E-commerce accounts from £19.95 per month

Features	9Net Basic	9Net One	9Net Prime	9Net Pro	9Net Enterprise
Monthly Fee	£9.95	£19.95	£29.95	£49.95	£79.75
Set-up Fee	£14.95	£24.95	£34.95	£44.95	£69.95
Space	10 Mb	25 Mb	50 Mb	500 Mb*	1 Gb*
Mailboxes (POP3)	5	10	15	25	100
Transfer Limit	1 Gb	1.5 Gb	2.5 Gb	5 Gb	15 Gb
Operating System	Linux	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K
Domain Registration	+	+	+	+	+
Unlimited hits	+	+	+	+	+
Unlimited Domains	–	–	–	+	+
Full ASP 3.0 (Win2K)	+	+	+	+	+
Python (Linux)	+	+	+	+	+
MySQL (Linux)	–	–	–	+	+ 10 Mb
PHP (Linux)	–	+	+	+	+



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Pay for 6 months upfront and GET ADDITIONAL 3 MONTHS HOSTING FREE!

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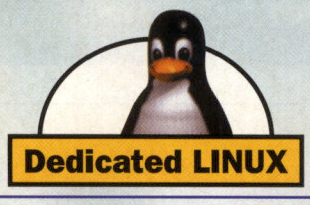
- From £44.95pm (*with 36m contract)
- High speed, high connectivity UK datacentre
- Service Level Agreement with 99.5% uptime guarantee



**from £45 per month*
or
£539 per annum**

**from £65 per month*
or
£779 per annum**

**from £99 per month*
or
£999 per annum**

*Prices based on a 36 month contract.

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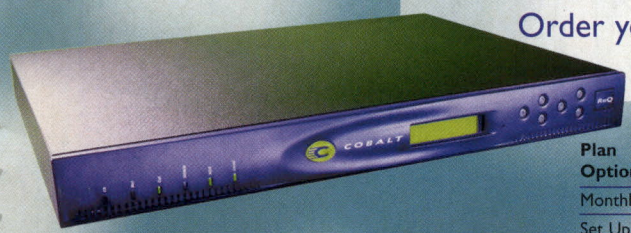
- Dedicated and/or Shared Firewall Services
- UK or US Datacentres
- Server Monitoring Services
- Remote Hands Server Management Services
- Tape Backup and Rotation Services

Monthly payment with minimum cash upfront available for all 9Net Dedicated Server packages! Order your Dedicated Server from 9Net now and improve your cash flow!



Plans	Cobalt RaQ4	Cobalt RaQ4i
Prices	£89 per month	£129 per month
Set Up Fee	£99 one time	£99 one time
Hard Drive	20 Gb	20 Gb
DRAM	128 MB	256 MB
Transfer limit	5 Gb	15 Gb

Plans	Cobalt RaQ4 r	Cobalt RaQ4 r
Prices	£159 per month	£199 per month
Set Up Fee	£99 one time	£99 one time
Hard Drive	2 x 20 Gb	2 x 30 Gb
DRAM	256 MB	512 MB
Transfer limit	15 Gb	15 Gb

Plan Options	Dedicated Office	Dedicated Pro	Dedicated Enterprise	Dedicated Enterprise Plus
Monthly Fees	£99	£199	£399	£499
Set Up	£199	£249	£299	£399
Processor	Celeron 733MHz	Pentium III 933 MHz	Pentium III 1.1 GHz	Pentium III 1.3 GHz Dual
Memory	128 Mb SDRAM	256 Mb SDRAM	512 Mb SDRAM	1 Gb SDRAM
Hard Drive	20 Gb IDE	40 Gb IDE or 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W	2 x 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W	2 x 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W & 1 x 18 Gb
Raid	N/A	N/A	Mirror	Num 5
Back Up	Customer	Customer	Tape 15/30 Gb	Tape 15/30 Gb
Transfer limit	10 Gb	15 Gb	25 Gb	50 Gb
IPs	1	1	1	1
Operating System	Linux RedHat	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*

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PLUS 9Net Remote Hands Managed Hosting Services

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PAY FOR 12 MONTHS UPFRONT AND RECEIVE ADDITIONAL 6 MONTHS ABSOLUTELY FREE!

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Practical internet

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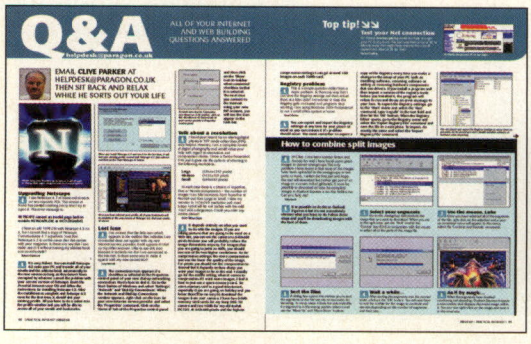

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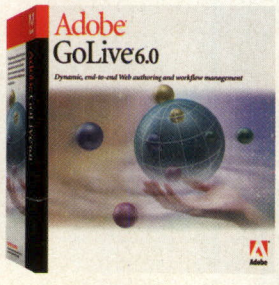

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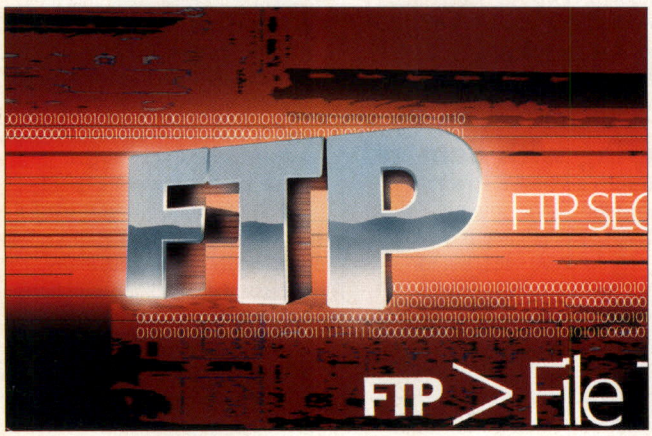

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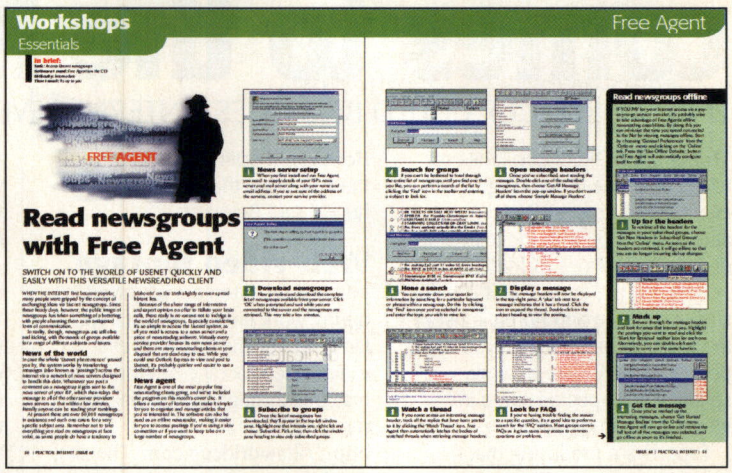

Essentials
MUST-READ STEP-BY-STEP HELP FOR BEGINNERS AND EXPERIENCED USERS ALIKE

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Masterclass
WHERE WE TAKE YOU INTO MORE ADVANCED TERRITORY

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66 Optimise your Web graphics for speedier downloading

Web Design
GET TO GRIPS WITH ALL THE LATEST WEB-AUTHORING TECHNIQUES

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Win! **£2,000 worth of Web Hosting from Kanganet.co.uk p74**

News

All the latest Web sites, products and services

World Cup fever comes to the Net

2002 WORLD CUP COULD BE BIGGEST INTERNET EVENT OF ALL TIME

This is the trophy that could bring the Internet to its knees

THE 2002 WORLD Cup looks set to become one of the biggest Net events of all time, as Web sites attempt to cope with the insatiable demand of millions of football fans.

Because the tournament is being staged in Japan and Korea, most of the matches are being played while people in the UK are at work, sparking an expected surge in Internet use in offices.

Experts are predicting that the month-long finals will create a demand for news to rival previous major events on the Net such as the death of Princess Diana, Nasty Nick's departure in *Big Brother* and the 11 September attacks.

Simon Boynton, Football Services Director at the Press Association (**www.pa.press.net**) said: "Interest in the World Cup has never been greater and millions of UK supporters around the world will be following games on the Net and via their mobile phones.

"The demand for information will largely be determined by how England and Ireland get on. However, if both progress beyond the first stage then interest will be huge," said Boynton.

Web-video footage

With games often being played during work time, action-starved fans can, for the first time ever, watch video footage of World Cup matches through the official site, run by Yahoo! at **http://fifaworldcup.com**. The site, which is expected to become the most visited of all time during the finals, is showing four-minute highlights of every game played. The service is available to subscribers of the 'Fifa VIP Club', which costs $19.95 (around £13) for the duration of the tournament.

"This first-time distribution of Fifa World Cup video highlights on the Internet represents a progressive approach on behalf of Fifa" said Yahoo! Chief Executive Jerry Yang.

However, anyone hoping for live coverage will be disappointed, as the rights-holder, KirchSport AG, is only offering highlights. A Fifa spokesperson said: "We would probably have offered full coverage but those rights weren't on the table."

Other popular World Cup sites include BBC World Cup (**www.bbc.co.uk/worldcup**), TeamTalk (**www.teamtalk.com/worldcup2002**) and WorldCupRivals (**www.WorldCupRivals.net**), which is the official fans' World Cup Web site.

Coping with demand

With such a massive scramble for information online, Internet analysts are predicting problems not only for Web sites, but for corporate networks as workers rush to check the latest scores.

Andy Crosby, European Product Marketing Director for site testing company Mercury Interactive (**www.merc-int.com**) said: "With Internet audiences estimated to be in the billions, sites need to be ready for huge traffic surges.

"The impact downtime could have on the world's largest media and gambling sites this summer will undoubtedly affect reputations, business and customer retention and revenues."

• As *Practical Internet* went to press, the Football Association's Web site failed to cope with the demand from football fans eager to be the first to see Sven Goran Eriksson's World Cup squad.

David Beckham, Michael Owen and Rio Ferdinand launch the new Umbro England kit. If these men do the business office networks could struggle. Hmm, bandwidth or World Cup success? Tricky choice...

World Cup hot shots

THE PICK OF THE SITES FOR JAPAN AND KOREA 2002

BBCi

www.bbc.co.uk/worldcup

The BBC's site provides office workers with the chance to keep up-to-date with every game as the goals fly in. Users can enjoy Gary Lineker's 'Guide to the Teams', among other things.

Fifa World Cup

http://fifaworldcup.yahoo.com

The official World Cup site is the exclusive provider of video highlights. As well as being able to watch four-minute snapshots of each game, users can check out all the latest team news, results and scorers.

Umbro.com

www.umbro.com/bunkoff

Umbro's site is designed to provide fans with advice for knocking off work to watch the games. It includes a top ten list of original excuses for not turning up and an 'escape' button if your boss approaches.

shorts

→ According to family photo restoration firm Imagerestore (**www.imagerestore.co.uk**), three in five women and two in five men have tried to trace their family tree online. The survey also revealed that only one in 10 was successful.

→ Telewest is offering customers the chance to try its broadband service for less than the cost of unmetered dial-up access. Under the special promotion, users can subscribe to the cable provider's Blueyonder service (**www.blueyonder.co.uk**) for only £13.48 per month for the first three months. The service usually starts at £25 per month.

Got a news story?
Please contact
James Thornton
Telephone: 01202 209379
Fax: 01202 299955
Email: jamest@paragon.co.uk

BT unveils 'no-frills' ADSL

NEW BROADBAND PRODUCT ATTRACTS INEVITABLE INDUSTRY CRITICISM

AS BT **(www.bt.com)** strives to enable ADSL in more parts of the UK, the company has announced its new cut-price 'no-frills' broadband service.

The new product, known simply as 'BT Broadband', will offer a stripped-down service for a monthly fee of £27. It will be available later this year and the company hopes it will help generate 500,000 additional residential connections by Summer 2003.

"Creating a mass-market for any service needs affordability plus innovation," said Pierre Danon, Chief Executive of BT Retail.

"From this autumn, residential customers will have a new, simpler alternative for surfing the Internet on one phone line."

BT plans to introduce a new Digital Support service around the same time, providing customers with help on upgrading to a broadband connection. However, it will not include email addresses or any free Web space.

Perhaps predictably, rival ISPs argue they can supply broadband with a greater range of features for less money than BT Broadband.

Bill Goodland, Director of Internet at NTL **(www.ntl.com)** said: "At NTL, we offer a range of broadband products to suit everyone, so it will be interesting to see who BT thinks this will attract.

"Broadband novices are likely to be put off by the lack of email accounts while more experienced users will be looking for more than a stripped-down service."

Saucy Scots site mix-up

NO SEX PLEASE, WE'RE SCOTTISH MPS

UNSUSPECTING INTERNET USERS searching for information on the Scottish Parliament have been stumbling across a saucy sex site.

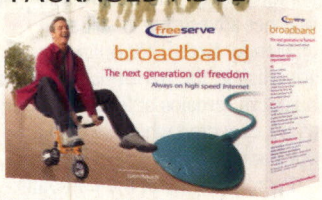
By logging on to **www.scottishexecutive.com**, punters seeking information on matters of Caledonian policy are instead presented with an escort site, offering businessmen the chance to hire out 'sexetaries'. The site features pictures of a variety of women in short skirts and claims that it "discreetly mixes pleasure with business'.

Having got wind of the site, the real Scottish Executive **(www.scotland.gov.uk)** is now investigating its options.

Margo MacDonald, a Scottish Nationalist MSP said: "This seedy site is probably designed to reveal everything while the official scotland.gov Web site is designed to make sure you know as little as possible about what is going on. But seriously, I don't like the idea of porn on the Web."

Broadband in a box

FREESERVE LAUNCHES PRE-PACKAGED ADSL ON THE HIGH STREET



NET USERS CAN now purchase a ready-to-go ADSL connection over the counter in the high street.

Freeserve **(www.freeserve.com)** has launched its new Broadband Installation Kit in Dixons, PC World, Currys and The Link stores across the country. The ISP is the first in the UK to introduce a complete ADSL connection pack, dubbed 'broadband in a box'.

The kit comes complete with software, ADSL filters and a modem, allowing users to set up their own broadband connection without needing a BT engineer.

Freeserve is currently running an introductory offer whereby the pack is available for £84.99, plus a £29.99 monthly charge for unmetered broadband access.

"Freeserve and Dixons got the UK's Internet market moving for the first time when we launched back in 1998, and this same combination will have an equal impact in broadband" said Freeserve's Chief Executive John Pluthero.

• Practical Internet has two Freeserve Broadband Installation Kits to give away! To get your hands on one, email **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the subject header 'Freeserve'.

Virgin slashes unmetered charges

VIRGIN.NET **(www.virgin.net)** has bucked the trend set by its rival ISPs and has cut the cost of its unmetered Net access.

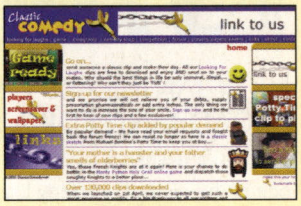
Following decisions by BT, Freeserve and AOL to hike the price of their unmetered services, Virgin.net has reduced the cost of its 24seven package to £13.49 per month from £15.

"I'm surprised by the recent announcements on price increases. We are dropping our price by simply passing on cost savings that we have worked hard to deliver over the past few months" said Peter Tuomey, Sales and Marketing Director of Virgin.net. "We will now share this benefit with customers, while at the same time continue to deliver the highest possible quality of service" he added.

→

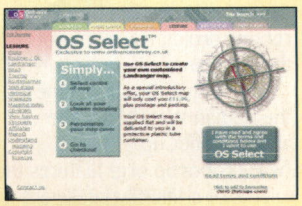
NEW Web sites

THE BEST NEW SITES UNCOVERED BY OUR PACK OF NEWS HOUNDS



Classic Comedy
http://classiccomedy.net
Fans of classic comedy shows such as *Monty Python* and *Benny Hill* can now help themselves to their favourite clips through this new site. Cult *Python* classics such as the 'parrot sketch' are available as free downloads. There's also an online store.

Nescafé
www.hairyoldcortina.co.uk
Anyone who's seen the Nescafé coffee ads will be familiar with the escapades of the Afro sporting star and his hairy motor. As well as offering you the chance to win five grand in an online competition, this site contains games, product news and a guide to being hip.



Ordnance Survey
www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/leisure
If you regularly find yourself aimlessly wandering around wondering where the hell you are, the new OS Select service can help. The site allows you to personalise your own Landranger map, meaning you'll never get lost again.

News shorts

→ Fancy seeing what your street looks like from the air? Getmapping (**www.getmapping.com**) has snapped highly detailed aerial photographs of Britain's cities, which are now available from the site. The high resolution images can be previewed online and then purchased for £19.95

→ Anyone partial to a bit of classical music can satisfy their musical desires following the launch of BTopenworld Classical. The service boasts a catalogue of 10,000 tracks for unlimited listening online. BT Openworld Classical costs £7.99 a month and is available from **www.btopenworld.com/classical**.

AOL announces £37bn loss

NET GIANT LEAKS CASH, BUT LOOKS TO BROADBAND FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

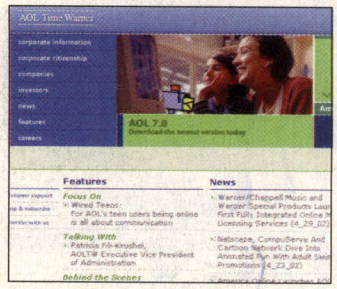
AOL TIME WARNER has suffered one of the highest quarterly losses in history after revealing a £37 billion write-down.

The write-down reflects the fall in value of the company's assets, which include the AOL branded ISP, film studios, magazines and cable TV stations.

The AOL Internet service attracted 1.4 million members across the world during the quarter, taking its total subscriber base to 36.4 million. However, weak advertising revenues have hit the company's turnover.

"BROADBAND WILL BECOME PART OF OUR SUITE OF PRODUCTS"

MATT PEACOCK, CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, AOL



AOL looks to broadband to rake in the cash

AOL Chief Executive Doc Parsons said: "The weakness of Internet advertising is still a challenge. Except for online advertising, the performance of our business remains at least as strong as we expected when we provided our earlier outlook."

Parsons said that the company had made "important progress" in areas such as broadband services and subscriber growth which would "drive the future growth of AOL Time Warner."

As of yet, AOL (**www.aol.co.uk**) has still not offered competitively-priced broadband in the UK, but it does have plans to release a self-install service based on the BT Wholesale product in the coming weeks.

Matt Peacock, Chief Communications Officer for AOL UK said: "We have been working constructively and positively with BT for some time in order to make the mass market launch of broadband possible.

"Broadband Britain is now starting but it will be evolutionary process. As far as AOL is concerned, broadband will become part of our suite of Internet access products and will feature broadband-specific content."

Robot World Cup kicks off

ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT STARS GET READY TO BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

FORGET YOUR OWENS, Ronaldos and Zidanes, the real stars of Japan and Korea this year could well be a bunch of robotic droids – and it's not the German team.

The RoboCup: truly a game of two bolts

Running at the same time as the human World Cup, the annual RoboCup (**www.robocup.org**) features the talents of artificially intelligent robots from around the world. Now in its fifth year, the project aims to unearth robots capable of playing soccer at a professional level.

The venture hopes that by 2050, it will have developed a team of autonomous humanoid robots that can win against the human world soccer team champion.

The entrants in this year's competition include a 60cm tall robot from Sweden called Elvis. The silky-skilled bot has 46 different muscles plus Web cameras that act as eyes.

Elvis' creator Professor Peter Nordin said: "Touch sensors on his feet mean he can know where his centre of gravity is.

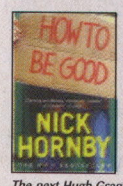
"If he is standing on one or two feet, he knows that if his centre of gravity is outside one of his feet, he will fall and that he should try to keep it inside even if he is moving."

STAT ATTACK

Top ten books

THE CURRENT BESTSELLERS ON BOL (**WWW.UK.BOL.COM**)

1. **How to be Good**
   Nick Hornby, Penguin, £3.50
2. **How to be a Gardener**
   Alan Titchmarsh, BBC Consumer Publishing, £9.50
3. **Everything's Eventual**
   Stephen King, Hodder & Stoughton, £9.00
4. **Fatal Voyage**
   Kathy Reichs, Arrow, £3.50
5. **1st to Die**
   James Patterson, Headline, £3.50
6. **Without Fail**
   Lee Child, Bantam Press, £6.50
7. **A Man Named Dave**
   Dave Pelzer, Orion Mass Market, £3.50
8. **Stupid White Men...**
   Michael Moore, HarperCollins, £9.50
9. **Echo Burning**
   Lee Child, Bantam, £3.00
10. **Carol Vorderman's Detox for Life**
    Carol Vorderman, Virgin Books, £5.50



The next Hugh Grant film at number 1

Alan shows you how to get down and dirty at 2

→

NEW Software

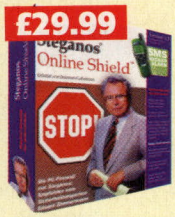
READ UP ON ALL THE LATEST AND GREATEST SOFTWARE

Steganos Online Shield

www.mediagold.co.uk

Promising to help you stave off vicious hackers, the Steganos Online Shield can let you know when your PC is under attack by sending you an SMS message. Claiming to make your computer invisible to hackers by filtering ICMP messages, the software also allows you to remotely control and protect you machine.

£29.99



Internet Design Suite

www.serif.com

Bundled with WebPlus 7, PhotoPlus 6 and 3DPlus 2, this package is designed to give budding Web builders the chance to let their creative imaginations run amok. Complete with a series of easy-to-use wizards, the software is ideal for beginners wanting to get to grips with Web design, image-editing and animation.

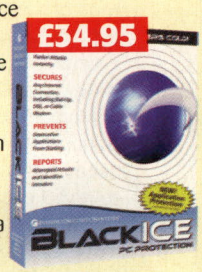
£49.99

BlackICE PC Protection 3.5

www.guildsoft.co.uk

If you're paranoid about intruders raiding your PC, then this application can help give you some peace of mind. PC Protection 3.5 is designed to advance the level of protection available to the home Internet user and combines intrusion detection systems and firewall technologies with a nifty new security measure and application protection.

£34.95



LOOK FORWARD BTopenworld

Open

With BTopenworld anything's possible on the Internet.

mail distant relatives • Book a holiday • Find love • Buy CDs • Get news • Do your banking • Check the weather • Send ph
ar • Learn a language • Read your horoscope • Consult a map • Research an assignment • Discover new recipes • Buy share

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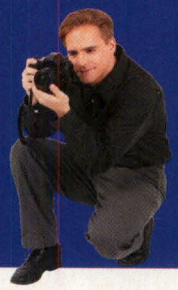
News

shorts



→ If you fancy yourself as a bit of a tasty snapper, try Canon's Digital Creators Contest, aimed at encouraging creativity in visual artistic expression for the Internet generation. Further details are available from **www.canon.com/cdcc**.

→ A new game has been released that lets you assume the role of an Uplink Agent who makes a living by hacking into rival computer systems, stealing research data and framing innocent people. Uplink costs £19.99 and is available from **www.introversion.co.uk**.

Net Watch

INTERNET FREEDOM'S **CHRIS ELLISON** KEEPS AN EYE ON THE LATEST NET DEVELOPMENTS

LONG, LONG AGO, Netscape was the dominant Web browser. Then along came Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Now Netscape's share has been reduced to a measly 7%. Just before AOL Time Warner bought the firm out in 1999, Netscape made its source code publicly available in an effort to save the company. Years later, the open source movement has delivered the fruits of its labour. It hopes to recapture the market of 35 million Web surfers with Mozilla 1.0.

The idea of open source is that the programming code is public and can be used by anyone provided they make any modifications public. This has the advantage of keeping development in the public domain. The difference is that no individual or firm can profit from developing the code itself.

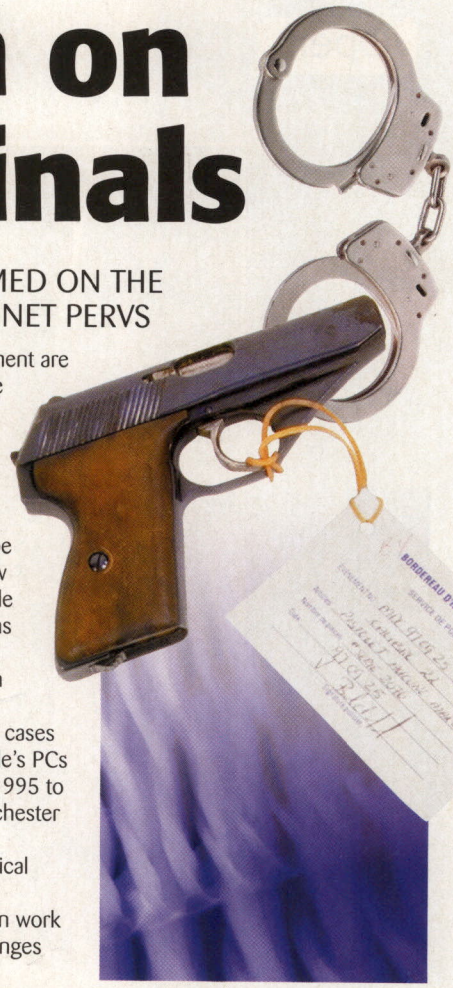
"SOCIALISM IS BEING REVITALISED BY PROGRAMMERS"

Open source is frequently touted as the antithesis to big business monopolies. While Microsoft has come to represent the evils of capitalist development, open source has come to represent socialist collectivism. Just when social alternatives in the real world have completely collapsed, socialism is being revitalised by computer programmers.

But there is nothing inherently progressive about open source. What seems to motivate much of the open source movement is the idea that they might be undermining the success of big business. In the absence of any real alternative to capitalism, it is easy to react against human achievement. After all, it is far easier to change your Operating System than it is to change the world.

Internet Freedom can be contacted on ***campaign@netfreedom.org****. The campaign's Web site is at* ***www.netfreedom.org***

Crackdown on cyber criminals



AS GERMAN SCHOOL SHOOTINGS ARE BLAMED ON THE NET, INSPECTOR KNACKER GETS TOUGH ON NET PERVS

FOLLOWING A STRING of major crimes linked to the Internet, police are now successfully using new technologies to catch crooks online.

Police across the country have arrested suspected Net paedophiles in the largest operation of its kind ever carried out in the UK. The crackdown, codenamed Operation Magenta was part of a six-month investigation under the Child Protection Act.

Trained officers from Hertfordshire Constabulary's Child Protection and Investigation Unit and the Abusive Images Unit from Greater Manchester Police used specially developed software to pinpoint Web users who were exchanging disturbing images in Internet chatrooms.

A total of 75 addresses across the UK were searched and several arrests made. Large numbers of computers and other equipment are expected to be seized before the investigation is closed.

Police say the operation shows the Net is not 'unpoliceable' and those who attempt and succeed in obtaining these images will be targeted. The equipment now employed makes it impossible for those who use chat rooms to remain anonymous.

Inspector Terry Jones from Greater Manchester Police's abusive images unit said that cases of child porn found on people's PCs had risen from a handful in 1995 to 41,000 in 1999, in the Manchester area alone.

He said that this latest tactical operation was "a clear demonstration that forces can work together to tackle new challenges posed by the Internet."

Hoax of the month

£45,000 FOR THE WORLD'S LAST BENGAL CHIHUAHUA? SOUNDS LIKE A SHAGGY DOG STORY

WHEN A TOP society for pooches advertised "the world's only surviving Bengal Chihuahua" for sale on the Internet, it was bombarded with enquiries from hound lovers across the globe.

One African dealer even offered to stump up £45,000 in cash to land the hound after seeing the ad at **www.dogdirectory.inuk.com/bengals**.

However, there was to be a sting in the tail, as the whole thing was a spoof dreamed up by the owner's of the UK Dog Breeders' Directory, who are concerned about the increasing demand for 'designer dogs'. The site even mocked up a fake photograph and 'breed history' as part of the stunt.

The Directory's spokesman, Ryan O'Meara, said: "It is quite sick that so many people were ready to pay thousands of pounds for a 'designer dog' when thousands of needy pets are without homes, living in animal shelters."

Demand for Labradoodles (Labrador/Poodles), Schnoodles (Schnauzer/Poodle), Pomapekes (Pomeranian/Pekinese) and Porkies (Pomeranian/Yorkshire Terrier) has soared. None of these are recognised by either the UK Dog Breeders Directory or the Kennel Club (**www.the-kennel-club.org.uk**).

Klez be friends...

EMAIL USERS SHOULD beware when opening some messages, as a nasty worm could be lurking behind it.

The virus, known as Klez.I is a potentially dangerous variant of the Klez email worm that disguises itself with the subject line of either 'A new Website', 'Introduction on ADSL' or 'A very new game'.

When the file is run,the virus sends itself to all entries in the address book so it can spread as quickly as possible.

Further details, along with information on how to detect and eliminate the vicious bug from computer systems, are available from Panda Software (**www.pandasoftware.co.uk**).

→ The Net is now a significant factor in the break-up of marriages, according to Relate (**www.relate.org.uk**). Apparently the opportunities the Internet provides to meet other people along with easy access to pornography are threatening existing marriages. Relate claims one in 10 of the people receiving marriage guidance each year now blame the Net for their problems.

→ Web developers can now get their site noticed as soon as it goes online, thanks to a new service called What's New on The Net (**www.whats-new-on-the-net.com**). The site showcases new Web sites, allowing designers to publicise their pages quickly and easily.

Stand and deliver...

YOUR MONEY OR YOUR DOMAIN NAME

DOMAIN NAME HOLDERS are being warned to watch out for a scam designed to con them.

Many site owners have already received a letter from a bogus organisation called the Central Web Pages Register Ltd, which claims that their domain names will be disconnected if they don't pay the amount in full.

People should look out for a letter headed 'CWP Central Web Pages Register Ltd www.c-w-p.co.uk' which contains a charges notice for 15 May 02 to 14 April 03 totalling £225.60 along with a form for completing bank details. The notice states that in the event of non-payment, the Web address will be disconnected.

Ken Sorrie, co-founder and Director of respected domain name registrar Internetters (**www.internetters.co.uk**) warned Net users: "It seems as if these fraudsters have a list of .uk domain name registrants and are mailing this letter to everyone on it. I stress they are not an official domain name organisation and the letter should be ignored.

"Internetters is calling for the Central Web Pages Registrar to be investigated by the appropriate authorities and a Code of Practice for domain names so that the general public stop getting scammed in this way."

What dreams may come

MACROMEDIA PROMISES POWERFUL NEW TOOLS WITH DREAMWEAVER MX

FOLLOWING HOT ON the heals of Flash MX, Macromedia has released a new version of Dreamweaver, designed to give pro Web builders the ability to design and code glorious sites.

Dreamweaver MX combines the WYSIWYG layout tools of Dreamweaver with the application development features of UltraDev plus the extensive code editing support of HomeSite.

Macromedia claims that the software combines 'ease of use and power' in one integrated development environment for ColdFusion, HTML, XHTML, ASP, Microsoft ASP.NET, JSP and PHP sites. The product is designed to give users more control over their pages with features such as code hints, tag editors, extensible colour coding and code validation.

Thomas Watson, *Practical Internet's* Technical Editor and Dreamweaver guru is impressed with the new version: "Dreamweaver MX completely redefines the way the program works. With a much better menu system and more intuitive controls, anybody should be able to create dazzling pages pretty quickly. More importantly, it might just persuade people to dip into advanced Web techniques, like ASP and Web applications" he said.

AOL babe Connie is street crime victim

POPULAR 'WEB GENIE' PUNCHED IN THE FACE BY COWARDLY MOBILE PHONE VILLAIN

THE ACTRESS WHO plays AOL Web genie Connie has become the latest high profile celebrity to be mugged in central London.

Rachel Willis, who is known to millions of Britons as the face of giant ISP AOL's television adverts, was subjected to a vicious assault from a mobile phone thief who punched her in the face and then kicked her.

The 26-year-old redhead, who is the daughter of Liberal Democrat MP Phil Willis, was attacked just yards from her home in Kensington, south London, while talking to her mother on her mobile.

"It's horrifying that you can't walk down the street and have a conversation" Willis told BBC News Online after the incident.

Willis has played Connie for the last three years. Her trademarks are a futuristic dress made of AOL Web pages and her red hairdo.

Before hitting fame with AOL the actress starred alongside namesake Bruce Willis in cult Luc Besson movie *The Fifth Element.*

Superstars Liza Minelli and Liz Hurley have also been high profile victims of opportunistic London street crooks.

Hammer wielding cyberbabe Rachel Willis during a happier moment as AOL star Connie

Virtual ISP
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- Virtual Control Panel
- 3GB Bandwidth per domain
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- UNLIMITED EMail Forwarding
- UNLIMITED FTP Accounts
- Full PHP Support (UNIX Only)
- Full MySQL Database Support
- Full Perl & CGI Support
- Full CGI-BIN
- FREE Dynamic News Content
- Comprehensive Logs & Statistics
- WebMail Facility
- FREE Unlimited Use Of Dial-Up Facility
- UNLIMITED Free Technical Support
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- Monthly payment options available

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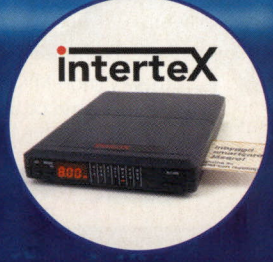
http://eliteukserve.net/intertex



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email sales@eliteukserve.net

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iCandy

Your guide to the latest and greatest objects of desire

Prints charming

Kicking off a new range of digicams, the EasyShare LS420 signifies something of a departure for Kodak. Not only has the styling been improved, but the onus has been shifted to simplicity, with the addition of a one-touch foolproof button for photo printing. Friendly features aside, the LS420 captures images at a genuine 2.1 megapixel resolution, flaunts a 3x digital zoom and comes with a dock for easy picture transfer.

Product: Kodak EasyShare LS420
URL: www.kodak.co.uk
Telephone: 01442 261122

£249.99

Pocket prince

One product that typifies the progress made by PDA manufacturers is Packard Bell's sassy new PocketGear 2060. Smooth edges and a metallic finish give this device a touch of class, while a 206Mhz Intel processor and 64Mb of RAM provide the brawn. Specifications aside, there's a built-in microphone, Bluetooth compatibility and an SD card expansion slot. At 146 grammes, the 2060 is also one of the lightest PDAs around.

Product: Packard Bell PocketGear 2060
URL: www.packardbell.co.uk
Telephone: 01628 512400

£429.99

Product: Canon MV5iMC Camcorder
URL: www.canon.co.uk
Telephone: 0800 616 417

TBA

Making movies

With digital video set to become a huge growth area over the next few years, Canon's MV5i should go down a storm with amateur film makers. A 10x zoom lens allows the user to get up close to the subject and the camera makes good use of the SD memory card format to enable simple image transfer. Still images can be easily captured via a 800,000 pixel CCD and there's even a feature called Night Mode for those nocturnal occasions.

Product: RipFlash Recordable MP3 Player
URL: www.pjbox.co.uk
Telephone: 0870 0660406

£199.99

Flash, ahhhhh

Here's a product capable of giving music industry bigwigs palpitations. Offering a feature Internet users could previously only dream about, the RipFlash is an MP3 player with a difference – it allows you to record audio from various sources in MP3 format. Perfect for vinyl buffs like *PI* Editor Paul Newman who need to preserve their old Harry Secombe 7"s in electronic format then...

Drive time

Iomega has a reputation for producing indispensable, but slightly quirky looking products and the HDD is no exception. With an impressive capacity of 20 Gigabytes and a slim-line build that makes it easy to carry around, this external hard drive is perfect for both those in possession of a burgeoning MP3 collection or anyone keen to dabble in digital video. Connection to either PC or Mac is via the latest USB 2.0 format or Firewire.

Product: Iomega HDD 20Gb USB2.0
URL: www.iomega.com
Telephone: 020 72160003

£189

Product: PHP Photosmart 812
URL: www.hp.com
Telephone: 08705 474747

£399

Smart operator

With simple one-touch picture emailing and a powerful feature set, this new top of the range digicam from Hewlett Packard should please both entry-level lensman and more ambitious snappers. There's no need to worry about image quality either; the Photosmart 812 boasts a Pentax lens, 3x optical and 7x digital zoom and can grab pictures of everything from your girlfriend to your granny with its meaty 4.0 megapixels.

Mobile mate

Yes, this really is a mobile printer. Although it's hard to see how many home users would actually want to print documents out on the move, this device is perfect for digital photographers working away from home thanks to the way that it prints images directly from an SD memory card. Powered by either an adapter or battery pack, the SV-PI0 can print to several different types of A9 paper (69x38mm) and at a resolution of 203 dpi.

Product: Panasonic SV-P10 Mobile Printer
URL: www.panasonic.com
Telephone: 08705 357357

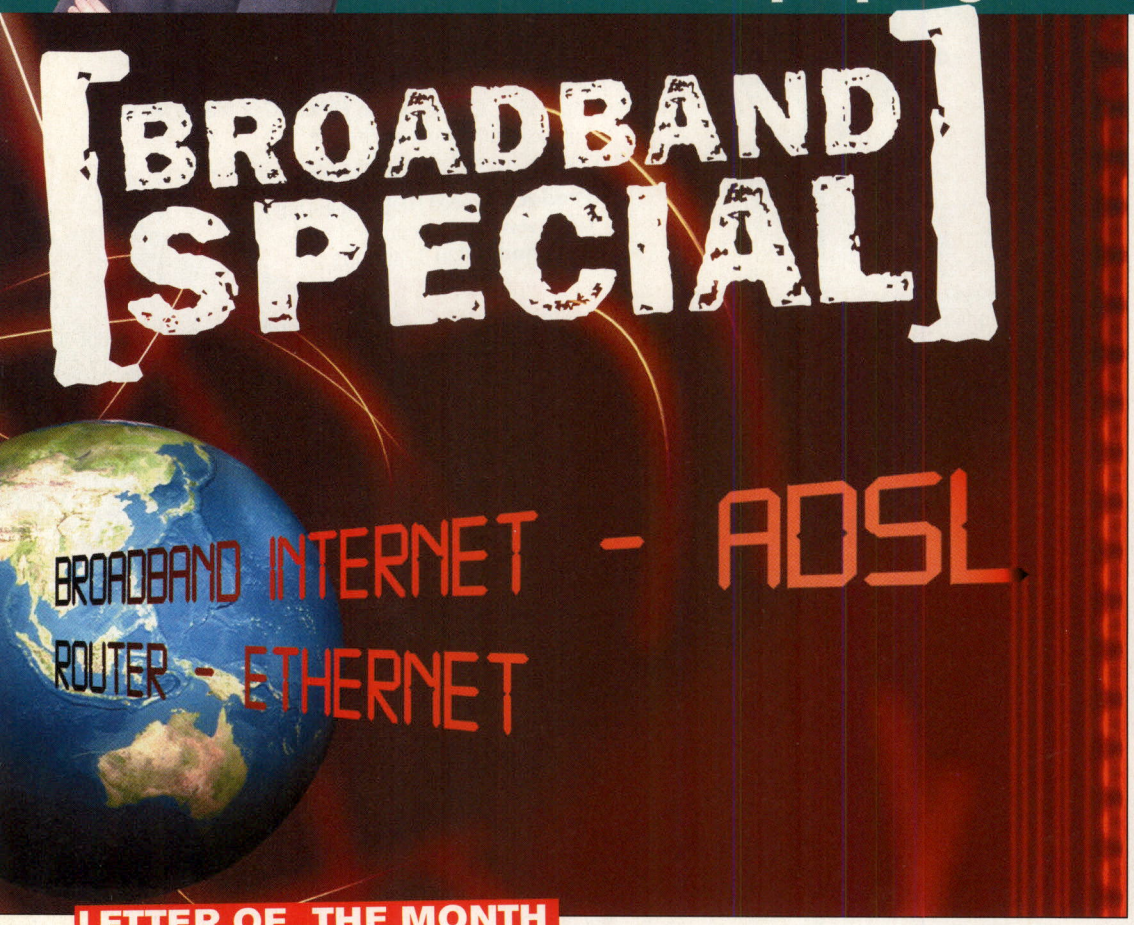
£149.99

Backchat

Email the editor at pi@paragon.co.uk

EMAIL US:
pi@paragon.co.uk

WRITE TO US:
PRACTICAL INTERNET,
PARAGON PUBLISHING,
ST PETER'S ROAD,
BOURNEMOUTH,
BH1 2JS



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Broadband brainteaser

I run a small business that currently has two PCs linked to the Internet via 56k modems using a two way adaptor, ie only one PC can access the internet at one time. While investigating broadband options, I discovered the option of connecting a single user ADSL package like BT's Business 500 package into our Ethernet network, then both PCs could access it (using a router approx £200).

Being a good sport, I decided to ask BT about this option – the response was not good. Apparently if BT discovered anyone using a single user broadband line in this way they would be cut-off immediately. Officially the options for a company wishing to use two PCs on broadband are BT Business 500Plus, which is approx £80.00 per month, or get two single-user packages at approx £30.00 per month each. The problem with the latter is that both contracts would tie you in for a year, so should you wish to upgrade within 12 months, it would cost you more. Do you know of any ISP that has a cheaper option for two-user system?

Chris Paul

In our opinion, if you pay a service for a set amount of bandwidth you should be able to do exactly what you want with it. So it does seem silly that BT is unable to provide a product that makes it worthwhile for the smallest businesses to get ADSL. We've had a look around for a service offering a cheap deal for two people sharing a business connection and according to Freedom2Surf's ADSL wizard, the company can sort you out for just £22.50 per month (the connection charge is £59.99). See www.freedom2surf.com for more.

Broadband revolution: how Practical Internet broke news of BT's ADSL price cuts back in issue 66

I can't get ADSL

After reading your Pipex article on page 11 of *PI* 66 and on the recommendation of a friend I decided to pursue the installation on a broadband Internet connection.

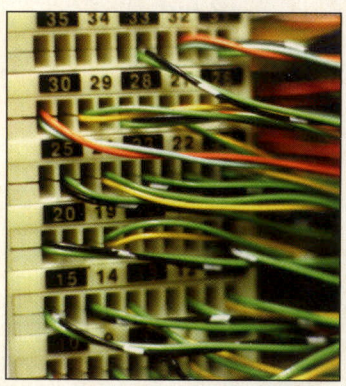
After logging onto Pipex's site and checking if my line could be upgraded to ADSL, I purchased the modem and filters from them and signed up. In due course the modem and filters arrived, but after a further four days nothing had happened. When I checked my order status online, the message told me they could not proceed with the order as 'there was too much line loss'.

Subsequently, I telephoned BTopenworld and asked them about this. They told me that although my local exchange was ready for ADSL my home line was not (even though I live approximately one mile from the exchange as the crow flies!).

If this is supposed to be the year of broadband to the masses and the Internet's coming of age, shouldn't BT be providing an adequate service to all its customers? At this moment I think a large proportion of the country's public cannot take advantage of this new breakthrough in Internet access because of BT's reluctance to provide the necessary updated landlines.

Charles Letby

It's a shame you couldn't get ADSL Charles, perhaps it would be worth pursuing the option of a second line; after all, satellite Internet access is still extremely expensive. We hope you got a refund from Pipex for the equipment you bought.

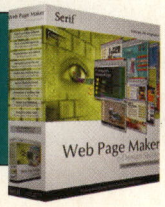


Many Internet users will be unable to get ADSL until BT upgrades not only their local exchange, but also the quality of their phone line

WIN A PRIZE

We're not easy to impress, but if you dazzle us with your cutting insights or pithy wit you stand every chance of getting your hands on a copy of Serif Web Page Maker.

This Web-authoring package, worth £39.99 certainly impressed us – we gave it four stars in a recent review. Find out more about Serif's products at **www.serif.com** or by ringing **0115 914 2000**



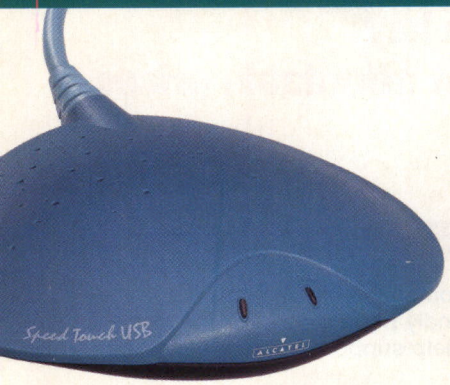
Your letters

Reader's tip

→ Voice of experience

Instead of signing up with any old ISP, why not check out the opinions of the people who have already tried them out? Consumer sites like Dooyoo (**www.dooyoo.co.uk**) and Ciao (**www.ciao.com**) publish reviews of ISPs written by members of the public that could certainly prevent you from being conned by Internet access cowboys. You can even leave your own views on the site!

Sally Walsh



Alcatel's bizarrely-styled SpeedTouch USB modem is pretty much a standard issue for broadband users

ADSL advocate

Setting up the Alcatel Speed Touch USB modem is far easier than setting up a printer. I have the Alcatel modem icon on my start bar, so one click and one second later I am online at 576.0 Kbps. I am only a home user, but what a difference it makes. Another big advantage is that the household can now use the telephone at the same time as I am online, so no more, 'can you get off that computer'! It is the future and the only way to go: £25 a month for 24/7 use at ten times the speed of dial up, no screeching tones, no 'sorry, the service is unavailable, please try later', no desperate switching of 0800 numbers to try and get online. Now if only I can think of a way to make money out of being online 24/7...

D W Griffiths

It's good to know that you're enjoying being part of an Internet access renaissance. Some of the home user broadband deals are now so attractively priced they make unmetered deals look like a complete rip off. Keep us informed if you discover a way of getting rich!

Demon disappointment

I have read with interest comments regarding ADSL in your magazine. Our area has now been set up for ADSL and I duly placed an order with Demon for their Express service. I decided against the DIY option and paid £210 for Demon to contract BT to come and install the line. The price included a Westell ADSL modem. Within a week the man from BT arrived, tested the line and left me with the modem and a CD to install the drivers. Alas, despite installing these as prescribed, the modem absolutely refused to work on my system running XP Pro.

Initially Demon was unable to rectify the problem, but when I rang back to check on progress I was given a code to enter in the phone number box of the connection and it worked! Surfing at high speeds I could not have been happier! Until, that is, I received a response from Westell who stated that they only supported the modem when running on a Windows 98 SE system. I checked their Web site and found that the modem I had been provided with was not mentioned on any support pages and had since been superseded by newer models.

Would the average person walk into their local PC World and purchase a modem that was not intended for their Operating System and in fact was not manufactured anymore? The moral of the story? If you want yesterday's technology, pay full price and go to Demon!

Peter R Hawkes

We're very surprised that Demon supplied this model, especially as almost every other ISP seems to be dishing out the Alcatel SpeedTouch USB. At least your ADSL connection is working. Perhaps someone from Demon would like to get in touch with us to help explain exactly why they are issuing customers with inadequate and outdated equipment?

Sign of the times

Someone gleefully put a picture of a road sign at the bottom of page 21 in the May 2002 issue and mistakenly referred to it as an "utterly pointless sign". That demonstrated a total lack of knowledge of the conditions in the country where the picture was taken. Far from being useless, such a sign is very necessary to warn visitors, perhaps UK residents, of the dangers that lie ahead on that "beautiful peaceful open road".

Judging by the shadow that's been cast by the sign, the temperature was possibly around 40°C when the photograph was taken. I think if one could imagine the awful daytime heat and the possible dangers when driving 100 miles (in some cases 200) between roadhouses, the reaction would be to shudder rather than laugh.

Norman Beck

Oops, looks like we've made a bit of a blunder on this one. We were absolutely convinced that the scene depicted in the image was somewhere just outside Leicester on the M1, but now you come to mention it...

The offending picture in all its glory...

Attachment of the month

This month our thanks are extended to Henry Porter for sending in this unusual picture of a hastily aborted attempt at reverse parking.

If you've received a funny or quirky email attachment that you'd like to share with fellow *Practical Internet* readers, send it to pi@paragon.co.uk with the subject header "Attachment of the month". We'll print the best each month for as long as we can get away with it.

Snippets

Bailing out

Keep doing a good job with the magazine, let me know if I can contribute, and don't call me for bail money.

Mike Drips

Re: Googlewhacking (*PI* 65)

I seem to be rather good at this! Try:
"Android marketing"
"Tarzan fetish"
"gagantuan pimple"
"trembling carrot"
I love this game! I found these all within 10 minutes!

John Thornley-Gibson

Enemy at the Gates

My older brother has grand designs on world domination but his Operating System is such total baloney that I don't think he stands a chance. How can I make him aware of this without hurting his feelings?

Ben Gates

Vital organ

I have only just started taking your organ and find it to be indispensable. I wonder if you are familiar with Drew Curtis's excellent site Fark **www.fark.com**? I'm sure fellow readers would enjoy the amusing content contained therein.

Alice Michaels

Poundstretcher

Practical Internet is the best pound-for-pound Internet magazine on the market keep up the great work!

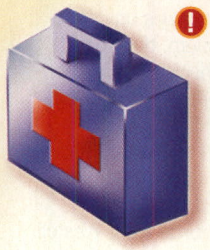
Alan Robbins

Can your web

1&1 became Europe's biggest web host by offering turn key all inclusive web solutions at affordable prices.

1&1 Voted No.1

The readers of .NET, PC Plus, Internet Works, Internet Advisor and PC Guide voted 1&1 as best web host.



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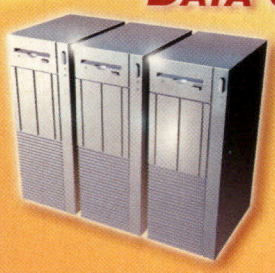

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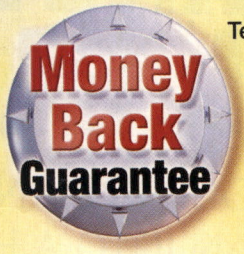

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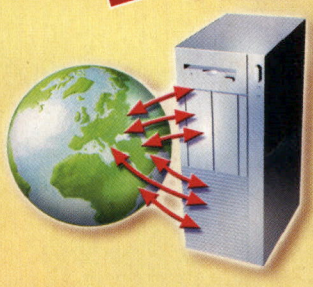

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DYNAMITE!

INTERNET SPEED TIPS THAT WILL BLOW YOU AWAY

TURN YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION FROM AN ALSO-RAN INTO A HIGH-SPEED WINNER WITH OUR COLLECTION OF TIPS AND TWEAKS. **THOMAS WATSON** AND **PAUL NEWMAN** SHOW YOU HOW...

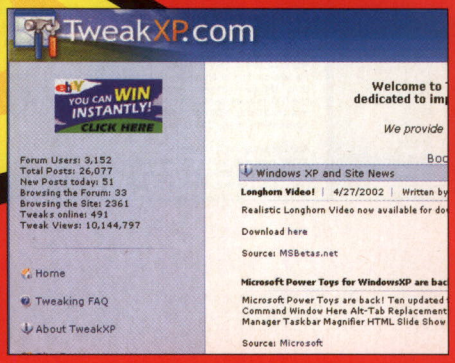
Very few people are genuinely 100% happy with their Net connection – we'd put the satisfied minority at somewhere around 5% of Net users. Having tweaked various elements of your browser, and squeezed as much juice out of your modem as is physically possible, you might think that you've run into a brick wall. No way, Jose.

The time is right to attack your computer where it hurts – the Operating System and hardware configuration. These are the only real ways of boosting the transfer rate at which data is copied to your machine. Fine-tuning your Operating System, especially if you're using Windows XP, is a particularly quick and easy method of enhancing your connection. Did you know, for example, that XP withholds some 20% of your bandwidth from you for what Microsoft intriguingly describes as 'essential processes'? And as for OS X on the Mac...

Once you've tinkered with your OS, the next logical step is a hardware upgrade. Don't worry, for we won't ask you to shell out hundreds of pounds – a RAM increase might be all you need. With the perfect PC at your disposal, you'll need to find an ISP that copes with your need for speed, and this may well involve ADSL access.

So, does your connection lack a certain oomph? Do you find that you have to wait less time for a bus to appear than for a Web page to download on your computer? Well, read on, and prepare to be blown away.

POWERING UP WINDOWS XP



Give your PC a shot in the arm by visiting TweakXP.com to find out how to squeeze more performance from Windows XP

Launched amid a blaze of publicity that would have embarrassed even the most self-aggrandising of minor celebrities, Windows XP was claimed to be the Operating System that you've always wanted. Packed to the gunnels with enhancements and improvements, punters across the world have indeed been turned on by the sheer blue joy of this latest OS. And, yes, Windows XP sees a significant improvement over every other Microsoft Operating System, with a thorough revamp of the way that connections are created and maintained among the top trumps for Internet users.

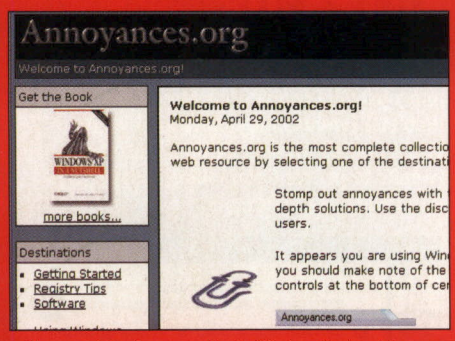
Cynical punters will already smell a rat, though, because Microsoft is known for being nothing if not opportunist and, sure enough, XP is riddled with 'interesting features' that actually impede your connection speed. The main culprits in this connection swindle demonstrate the good cop/bad cop dichotomy of Windows, where the OS tries to help you out with one hand, while taking all it can from you with the other.

If you're using Windows XP Professional, Microsoft has kindly preset the bandwidth settings for you. Cleverly, and you might just find yourself resenting this if you've been struggling by on a pathetic connection for the past few months, Microsoft has chosen to set aside some 20% of your bandwidth to 'essential tasks'. The thinking behind this bandwidth theft is less cloak and dagger than you might think, though. In the ivory towers of Microsoft, it would seem safe to assume that the majority of Windows XP Professional users do so in the office environment. Saving 20% of a workstation's bandwidth simply prevents you buggering up everybody else's connection by downloading vast 500Mb 'personal' files.

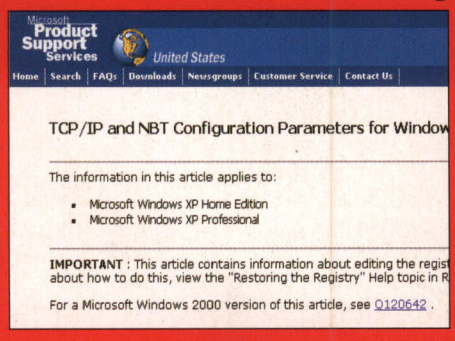
BANDWITH THIEVERY

Take Windows XP Professional out of the office and into the home, however, and the need for this bandwidth hogging reduces to nothing. In fact, it can then be classed as a time wasting luxury that few of us can afford to live with. Who the hell wants to sit about waiting on pages to download because Microsoft refuses to give you access to the bandwith you're paying for? Not many, we confidently predict.

How do you solve this problem, then? Well, it's all to do with the Quality of Service (QoS) settings, which determine the number and size of packets that can be transferred by Windows. Just to confuse you further, it's actually a section of the QoS settings called Resource Reservation Protocol (RSVP) that attributes bandwidth to different programs and services. This resource reserver divvies up the bandwidth according to your needs, but Microsoft has built that special Fourth Directive into it to ensure 20% is always kept behind. Altering the settings involves a fair bit of tinkering and fiddling as Administrator, so we suggest popping along to TweakXP at **www.tweakxp.com** for a fuller run-down than we could possibly give you here.



Willing to risk hacking around in the Windows Registry? Pay Annoyances.org a visit to find out exactly what to do



They might be responsible for stealing your bandwidth, but you'll still find plenty of solutions on the Microsoft Web site

WINDOWS 98/ME TWEAKS

Although we've focused on the tips and tricks you can perform on Windows XP to fine-tune your Net connection, there are plenty of hidden gems you can access to boost the performance of earlier versions of Windows. In fact, Windows XP is the most optimised Microsoft OS there has ever been in terms of connecting to the Net, so there are oodles of settings to mess about with in earlier versions.

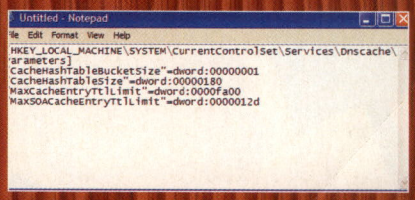
As we touched on before, Windows notoriously sets your PC by default to work at its best on a network connection. Rig it to a standard dial-up connection, and performance ain't what it should be. Because it involves so much more work than in XP, we'd suggest letting a third party program take the strain. One of the best on the go is the ever-effective FastNet99, despite its last century moniker. Pick it up at www.geocities.com/gcriaco, where you'll also find all manner of information related to the product. Five minutes spent in the company of FastNet, and you'll wonder how you coped before.

Because XP is new, many developers have yet to turn their hands to building tweaking software for Microsoft's prodigal son, which is why we've had to resort to so much Registry fiddling. Thankfully, there are tons of programs devoted to tweaking your Net connection for earlier versions of Windows. Check out Internet Rocket (www.roadside-software.com) for all the DNS Cache boosting you'll ever need, as well as more modem tweaking than you can shake a big shaky stick at.

DYNAMITE

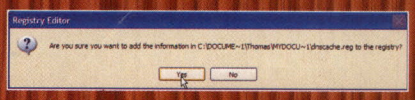
TWEAKING THE REGISTRY IN XP

The Registry should definitely be handled with the utmost care, but you can gain hugely impressive results with just a little tinkering. It's here you'll find all of the secret settings Microsoft would rather you didn't fiddle around with – which explains why tinkering is so much fun.



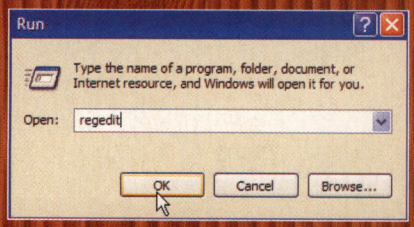
1. Faster DNS Caching

Speeding up the cache is a nice introduction to the world of the Registry. To do this, we'll have to create a new Registry item, which is incredibly easy. Simply create a new text document, then enter the text in the box above.



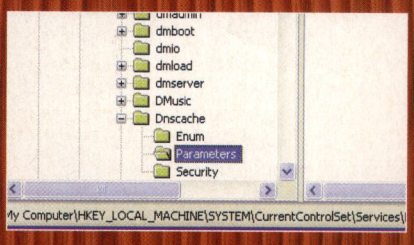
2. Save it

Now save the file as 'dnscache.reg', and save it anywhere you like on your PC. When you double-click on this file, you'll be asked if you want to import it to the Registry – select 'Yes'.



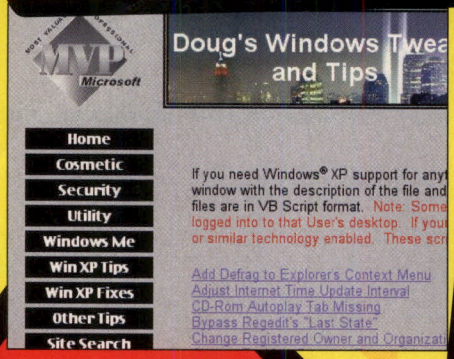
3. Open the Registry

Although we've edited the Registry, we still haven't got our hands properly dirty yet, so let's go into the built-in Registry Editor in Windows. Go to 'Start', then choose 'Run'. In the text box that appears, type 'regedit' to bring up the Registry Editor.

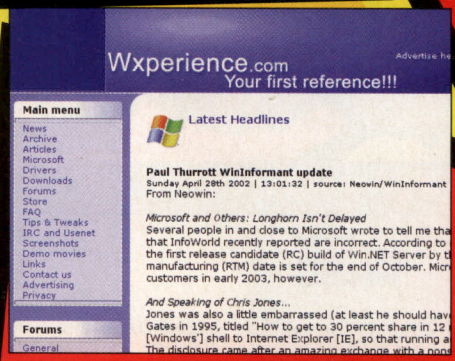


4. Find the key

In the Registry Editor, you should navigate to the following folder: HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\Dnscache\Parameters. Although we don't want to edit this key any further, you can see your newly created Registry key in all its glory. You've now added your very own Registry item, and have dipped your toes in the murky waters of Registry-editing.



*Doug Knox (**www.dougknox.com**) can help you to get XP purring – check his site*



*Find out how to get a hefty performance boost for both versions of XP at Wxperience (**www.wxperience.com**)*

SPIES LIKE US

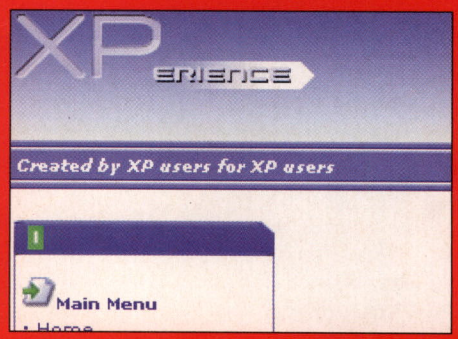
An altogether more irritating and subversive bandwidth hogger in Windows XP is the built-in spyware. The feature devoted to spyware on page 32 will tell you everything you need to know about this parasitic problem, but it's worth thinking about what constant spyware requests do to your connection. And guess what – each and every packet of information sent in the name of spyware holds up valuable bandwidth that you could have been using for far more productive reasons – like downloading MP3s. Spyware is nasty, intrusive and a plain resource eater through and through. Get rid of it using Ad-Aware, which you'll find on our cover CD.

While we're at it, why not storm in all guns blazing to sort your connection by getting jiggy with the contractions again. The MTU, or Maximum Transmission Unit, defines the maximum packet size that can be sent and received by your PC over a network. As many Windows 98 experts will testify, Windows is notoriously good at setting this figure incorrectly by default. The only solution therefore is to change the MTU figure, something that is easier said than done. You won't get near this magical number without delving deep into the Registry. Thankfully, Microsoft itself gives you all the instruction you need to tweak your Net connection for the better. Check out the Knowledge Base article at **http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;Q314053** for the ultimate manual.

DOMAIN MAN

After spending your last pennies on Windows XP machine, you really don't want a small-fry connection. Even if you've upgraded to ADSL, don't be surprised to find that pages are still taking ages to load. After much soul-searching and navel-gazing, you're left to wonder what's going on – the PC's fine, the connection's been optimised to the hilt, so why in Keith Chegwin's name can you still make a cup of tea while waiting for each page to download?

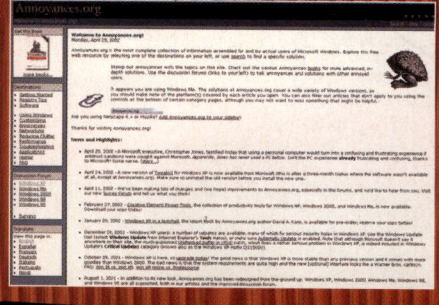
Well, it's all down to more contractions. This time, we're dealing with the DNS, or Domain Name Server, cache. Every time you enter a URL in your browser window, your ISP has to convert the words of this address into an IP address, consisting of 12 numbers. It's like a Net phone book – the URL you type is equivalent to someone's name and address, and it's then up to your ISP to turn this into a URL and then dial the number. As you can imagine, this conversion process takes a while, but Windows has an in-built cache to speed it up – in effect, your PC resolves the IP address locally, instead of having to find somewhere on the Net to perform the task. To your complete lack of surprise, this cache isn't optimised in Windows, meaning that you can squeeze a bit more performance from the way that addresses are found. Don't be scared of the Registry tweaks it involves, but don't go wading in unannounced either. Be careful out there.



*Good Web design is clearly not a priority for XPerience (**www.xperience.com**) – rest assured that PC performance is*

KILLER TIP

Are you annoyed by Windows? Surely not! If you are, your first port of call should be the appropriately-monikered Annoyances.org Web site (www.annoyances.org). Here, you'll find all manner of tips, tricks and tweaks to prevent you falling foul of Windows bugs ever again.



HARDWARE

TURN YOUR PC INTO A SPEED FREAK WITH OUR KILLER HARDWARE TIPS

Windows XP is undoubtedly the optimum Operating System to get you connected, but you'll struggle along at the same lukewarm rate unless you ramp up your PC hardware to give it more performance. In fact, unless you're equipped with the biggest P4 package going, it's likely that you'll need some kind of upgrade just to make your PC XP-ready.

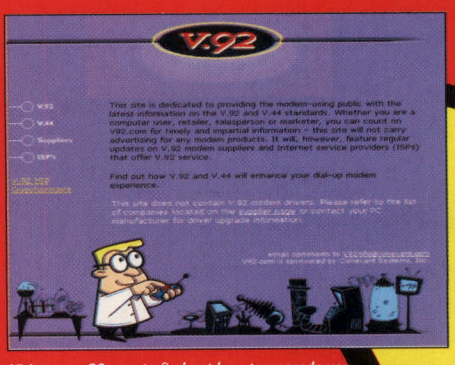
First things first, though, and it's time to take a long, hard look at that crumbly 56Kb modem you've been using for the past few years. Until recently, the few upgrade options available to you only afforded paltry performance. Now, you're spoiled for choice, with a massive TWO worthwhile options available to you. We'll go into the frankly massive difference ADSL can make to you later, but the horizon is also cluttered with another affordable, new technology – V92 modems.

Replacing the frankly antiquated V90 protocol, V92 can't promise connection speeds of more than the traditional 56Kb, but does mark a couple of distinct improvements. First of all, it shaves half the time it takes to connect to the Net in the first place. What this means is that you'll get less of that grotesque squealing while your modem talks to the network. Secondly, call waiting is now integrated into the hardware – a V92 modem will happily disconnect for a bit to let you know the phone is ringing, without any of the ridiculous hassles you used to get. Find out more from the appropriately named **www.v92.com**.

IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY

Aside from snapping up a faster modem, the most direct hardware route to speedier browsing is to install more RAM. It's something of a 'quick fix', admittedly, and is often construed as a stopgap solution, but few hardware upgrades make such a difference for less than 50 quid.

How does RAM affect your browsing speed? In many ways, oh doubtful one. Every page you visit has to be imported to your PC in order for it to be displayed – more RAM increases the speed your Windows machine moves at, meaning that transferring files from raw data to Web page elements speeds up. Secondly, more RAM means quicker cache reading. Your browser always checks your Temporary Internet Files folder for cached versions of the selected page. If you've got a piddly amount of RAM, your PC will struggle to achieve this seemingly mundane task.



Visit www.v92.com to find out how to upgrade your modem to the latest and (marginally) quicker standard

Memory game: the more RAM you've got, the better your PC's performance. See Dabs.com for the latest memory prices

THE PROCESSOR OPTION

The other, far more significant, hardware upgrade you can undertake is a processor upgrade. Let's face it, no other piece of kit can make such a substantial difference to your PC – in short, the processor governs the power and speed of your machine, much like the engine of a car. The problem with processors comes from the hassle it takes to install a new one. Alas, there's none of the PCI expansion slot sliding ease you find with new RAM, and instead →

A QUESTION OF RAM

PC hardware is rife with riddles and confusions, and RAM is no different. Here's a rundown of the different types of memory you can expect to find.

SDRAM

Apart from a short period last year, SDRAM has always been the most widely used RAM type. Synchronous Dynamic RAM, to give it the full title, lost out with P4 non-compatibility issues at first, but recent P4 motherboards have been tailored to accept this format.

RDRAM

Rambus Dynamic RAM is much faster than its SD counterpart, and provides the perfect accompaniament to a lightning fast P4 processor. It'll set you back double the amount, though.

100 or 133MHz?

This relates to the memory slots on your motherboard, and the speed of the chips you can slot into them. Most modern motherboards deal in 133MHz currency, although this faster type of RAM is backwards compatible.

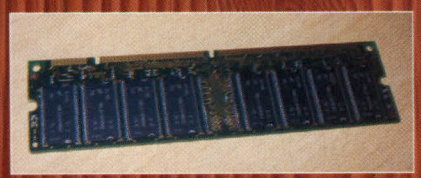
ADD MORE RAM TO YOUR PC

Your first DIY PC job is a doddle, honest

Once you've realised that you need a power boost on your PC, you should resign yourself to having to open up the casing, and getting your hands mucky on the inner workings of your computer. Thankfully, it's actually very easy to do, as we'll show you right now.

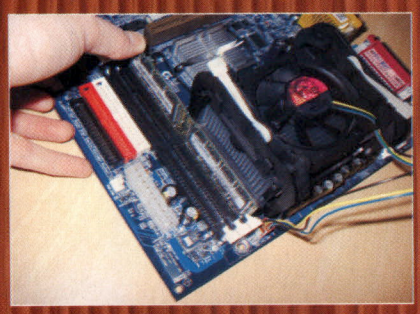
1. Open up the PC

Before you even start to think about messing around with the inner workings of your PC, you're going to have to get inside. Unscrew the locking screws at the back, then slide the side panels off. You should now see the chips and boards that make up your PC.



2. The RAM chip

With your PC opened up, it's time to grab hold of the RAM chip itself. Open the clasps at each end of the RAM on the motherboard, which act as locking clips to hold the chip in place. Position the chip on top of these clasps, ready to be eased into place.



3. Ease it in

Now, gently slide the chip in. Once you've positioned it perfectly, the clasps should automatically close themelves, locking the chip in place. If not, remove the chip and try again.

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DYNAMITE

X MARKS THE SPOT

Guaranteed ways to boost performance in Apple's OS X

OS X heralds a new age in Apple Operating Systems, but the only problem is that, until now, everyone that has installed it has effectively been taking part in the biggest OS beta testing program of all time. The appalling performance of early builds of OS X has been well-documented elsewhere, so we won't go into it in too much detail here, but do bear the following in mind:

UPGRADING: make sure you use the Software Update control panel to download regular updates to OS X. The latest version, OS 10.1.4, contains several features that make networking, Remote Access and overall performance far more responsive.

LOAD UP ON MEMORY: OS X is an absolute bitch where memory stealing is concerned. The Operating System itself needs about 128Mb to run effectively, so buy as much as you can realistically afford and don't try to get by with anything less than 256Mb.

WATCH YOUR DRIVERS: Many of the drivers written for OS X products like external modems (and particularly the Alcatel Speed Touch USB, broadbanders) are utter pants. Keep an eye out for regular driver updates to ensure that your system runs smoothly.

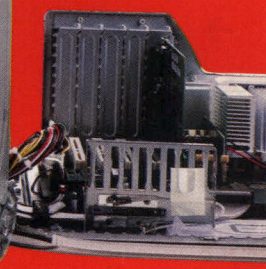
PICK THE RIGHT MAC: If you have anything less than a 500Mhz G3 processor we'd advise you to steer well clear of OS X. Apple's new baby requires so much in the way of system resources to run that the benefits of switching from OS 9 are totally wiped out for all but the most recent Macs.

DON'T USE CLASSIC: OS X's Classic environment allows Mac users to run their old OS 9 applications on OS X, but it's slower than a lethargic tortoise and hogs enormous amounts of system resources. Turn it off.

STAY SECURE: OS X is based around the ageing Unix Operating System. This makes it rock solid, but much more vulnerable to hackers than previous incarnations of the Mac OS. Make sure you buy a Firewall to protect your system and preserve your bandwidth. Norton Personal Firewall is available for the Mac and you can pick it up from **www.symantec.com**

Beauty and the beast: it may look fantastic but Mac OS X is an absolute beast when it comes to hogging system resources

RAM it down: it's generally easier to add more memory to a Mac than a PC



you're looking at a whole new motherboard, and a hell of a lot of fiddling – not to mention an extra hundred notes to boot.

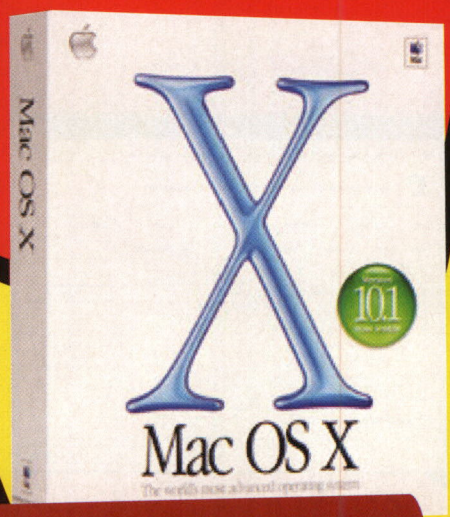
The question you have to ask yourself, therefore, is: when is it right to upgrade your processor? Basically, if you have a decent processor already (and anything beyond 700MHz or so falls into this category), then you should be able to get a hefty improvement from a RAM upgrade. If you're struggling by on a 433MHz Celeron, then a spanking new P4 2GHz job will bring you almost unimagineable speed benefits. Granted, it'll cost you around £300 in the process, but it's worth it.

THE MAC ANGLE

Never let it be said that we don't cater for Mac fans in Practical Internet. With all this talk of Windows's deficiencies you would expect most Mac fans to be sniggering into the back of their hands at the anguishes of their Wintel cousins. Nothing could be father from the truth, especially if you've recently taken the plunge and migrated to Apple's much vaunted next generation Operating System OS X.

We'll return to OS X shortly, but the first thing every Mac user should be painfully aware of is that Apple has, traditionally, been extremely stingy with memory. If you're running anything up to OS 9 then buy as much extra RAM as you can afford to give your system a real kick in the backside. Not only will this allow your Web browser to work more efficiently, but it will also allow you to run a wide range of Internet applications all at the same time, without the fear of memory leaks taking hold. Ultimately, we recommend at least 256Mb of RAM to get the best out of your Mac. See Computer Warehouse (**www.cwonline.co.uk**) for the latest memory prices, although 128Mb should only set you back about £35.

Perhaps the next biggest thing you can do to speed up the Internet access on a Mac is to ditch Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator in favour of the far more zippy Opera Web browser (**www.opera.com**). Not only does Opera render pages far quicker than its more illustrious rivals, but it also contains a host of handy features to make your browsing more productive. And while we're on the subject of more productive browsing, the Mac has been designed to make far better use of short cut keys than Windows. Learn these and you'll be amazed how much quickly you can surf.



KILLER TIP

If you're stuck with your processor for the time being, and even a RAM growth won't solve your speed disease, you might want to get involved in some 'over-clocking'. Basically, this involves making your processor move more quickly than it was designed to. It's possibly the most dangerous thing you can do to your PC, and won't make you very popular with your processor makers, but you can pick up speed advances of up to 20% – and that's genuine. Check out www.tweak3d.net for more information.

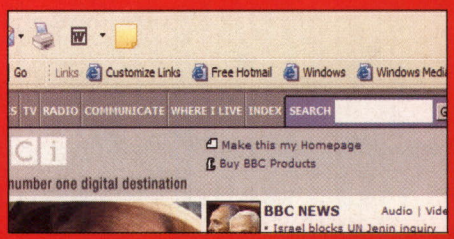
BROWSING TIPS

BECOMING A QUICKER SURFER WILL HELP YOU TO GAIN REAL SPEED BENEFITS

Charging up your PC will undoubtedly benefit your Net performance, but don't forget to give your browser a hefty power injection. Thankfully, there are enough tips, tricks and tweaks available in Internet Explorer to turn it into the Maurice Green of browsing, so read on to prevent your browser being left behind at the starting blocks.

One complaint we frequently hear at *Practical Internet* is that Internet Explorer 'takes too long to load'. This is all down to your home page selection, and can be fixed quicker than it'll take you to read this. For the easy option, go to 'Tools', 'Options', then click on 'Use blank' under the home page option. This way, IE won't load up a Web page whenever you start it, shaving seconds off the time it takes to load.

Spending hours scanning your Favorites might be some people's idea of a dream weekend pastime, but we'd much rather have access to our preferred sites on an instantaneous basis. First up, we'd suggest adding some folders to the list to categorise your links. As with all Favorites fiddling, you're much better off working within the source folder, which you'll find at 'C:\Windows\Favorites'. After you've categorised the folders, try personalising the list by going to 'Tools', 'Options', 'Advanced', then ticking the 'Enable Personalized Favorites Menu' box. Favorites might be a good way of accessing frequently-visited sites, but there's a much quicker way. All you need to is make sure the Links Bar is turned on by going to 'View', 'Toolbars', and ensuring the 'links' selection is ticked. Now, simply drag and drop any link from the Web into this Links Bar, and you'll be able to bring up the site in question with just one click of your mouse.



Use Internet Explorer's Links Bar to get around the Net quickly. You'll never use Favorites again, well not much anyway...

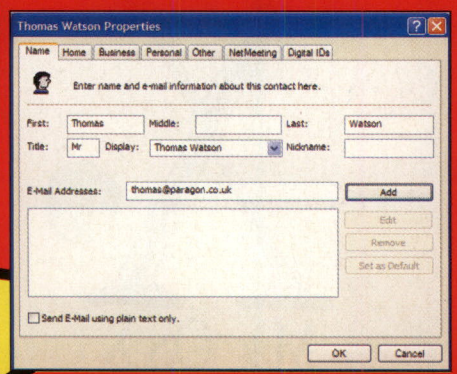
LOOKING BACK

Rather than adding every single site you ever visit to your Favorites or the Links Bar, you have another option for revisiting previously browsed sites. The History section (press CTRL + H to bring it up) has been revamped in IE6, and you can now browse these cached sites based on a variety of options. The 'view in order browsed today' option is particularly useful for retracing your steps. If you don't have a clue where you've been, but remember seeing something interesting somewhere, you want to make use of the in-built 'search' facility. Enter a keyword, and IE6 will scan through the HTML files stored in your History folder for instances of it.

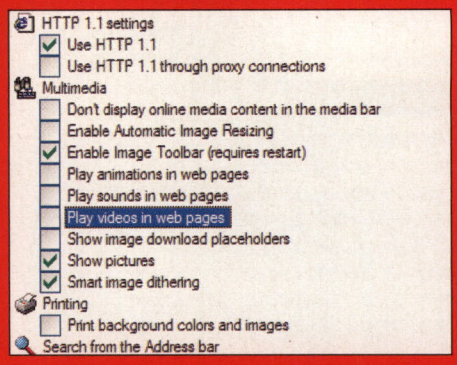
Another hindrance on the Net is having to retype your details again and again when signing up for Web accounts. Even having to rewrite your Webmail login information time and again soon becomes tiresome. Get rid of this irksome bore by turning on the 'Autocomplete function' in IE6. Ideally, you should help the AutoComplete feature perform to its utmost by filling in the 'MyProfile' information, in addition to turning the setting on for as many items as possible. Find it at 'Internet Options' then 'Content'.

CUT THE CRAP

Primarily, though, the most significant speed improvements to your browser can be made by removing many of the useless features of Web sites. Who the hell wants to hear a MIDI version of Agadoo when they visit a Web site anyway? Go to 'Internet Options', then click on the 'Advanced' tab. You'll then see a list of the settings that define the way Internet Explorer works. A bit of common sense here should reap massive benefits pretty quickly – cutting page animations, sounds and page transitions will quite simply see pages load quicker to your PC. Considering that's the very reason why you're reading this page in the first place, then it can't be all bad.



Save time filling out tedious forms on Web sites by setting up a profile with all your details in Internet Explorer's Profile Manager



Fancy listening to crap MIDI versions of Agadoo? We thought not. Turn of Web gimmicks on your browser for warp speed surfing

LIGHTNING FAST NET ACCESS

Once you've fine-tuned your PC with the various software and hardware upgrades we've detailed here, then there's really only one other thing you can do to ensure that your PC runs like the electronic equivalent of a French TGV express train and that's upgrade your Internet connection. Naturally, upgrading your Net connection involves running the whole gamut from dial-up ISPs to installing a lightning quick ADSL connection, so hop over the page and allow us to provide enough information to suit whatever type of connection you have...

Netscape tips

It might be losing to its great rival in the browser wars, but Netscape is still pulling in many a punter. Like Windows and Mac OS, the two big browsers are increasingly merging into one, with similar features appearing on both. This means many of the items featured on this page will actually work on Netscape, but there are a couple more tips you should get to know. For a start, you should learn to embrace the sidebar, which can be transformed from an irritant into your best browsing friend with some manipulation – it houses your bookmarks and page history in easy to use tabs, so should be treated with a bit of respect. While you're at it, get rid of the rest of the gunk that masquerades as 'essential' in Netscape – anything that's described as a 'channel' is guaranteed to be nothing but advertising.

KILLER TIP

After weeks of trying, you finally find that dream site, offering just about everything you need. Unfortunately, it comes up 10p short, so you want something similar. Back to the drawing board? Not on your nelly. Go to 'Tools' then 'Show Related Links', and you'll be given a list of similar sites.

KILLER TIP

Struggling to find the time to devote attention to your favourite pages and download mountains of MP3s simultaneously? Forget about it, and start offline browsing instead. You can use the built-in feature in Internet Explorer, but we think you're better off with a third party program like Offline Commander for true offline browsing heaven.

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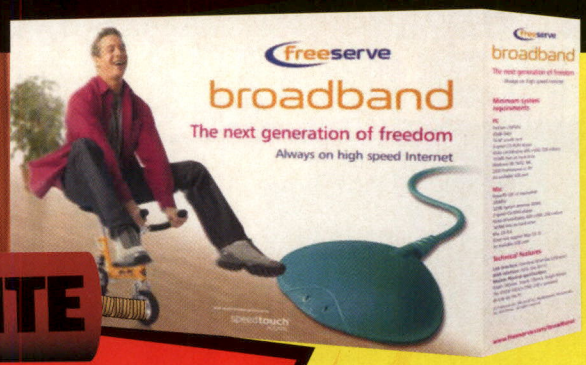
TISCALI

BROADBAND

STILL ANNOYED WITH YOUR CONNECTION? A BIGGER PIPE IS THE ONLY OPTION



THE DIAL-UP DILEMMA

Don't worry if you can't get broadband, there are still plenty of things you can do to ensure that you squeeze the maximum performance out of your free or unmetered ISP.

First up, let's measure the actual amount of data your phone line can handle. This should give you some idea as to whether the connection speeds provided by your ISP are up to scratch or not. Point your browser at DSLReports (**www.dslreports.co.uk**), where you'll find a handy diagnostic tool for measuring the maximum bandwidth your ISP connection can handle. If you think your ISP is under-performing you can always sign up with another provider and test its performance too.

There are other things that can slow your Net access down and the biggest culprit could be your telephone line itself. If your phone line fails to connect you to the Net at anything above 40k then it may be worth asking BT to turn up the gain on your line or even try and eliminate some of the noise that distorts the data being carried from your ISP.

BRING ON THE BROADBAND

If you're lucky enough to live in a broadband area then you might as well rip out your PC's internal modem and stamp on it. There's no doubt about it, broadband is the way to go. With prices now firmly below the £25 mark, it's impossible for any other type of connection to compete with broadband for value. Consider that BTopenworld has just raised the cost of its unmetered access product to £15.99 per month and then contrast this price with the £23.44 charged by an ISP like Pipex for ADSL.

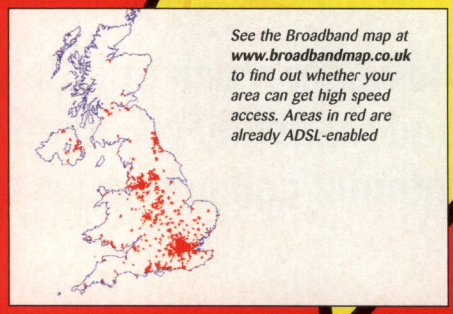
ADSL's 512K connection speeds blow dial-up access into antiquity. Assuming that you can actually get it, the only drawback with ADSL is that it is relatively pricey to get started. At present there are two ways of getting hooked up: you can either pay for a BT engineer to come out and connect you or you can buy the required hardware and do it yourself.

The typical cost of an engineer-installed ADSL connection is around £250. However, the self-install route is extremely easy and much cheaper. All you need is an ADSL modem or router, a set of micro-filters to plug into your phone sockets and an ISP to connect you. Typically, the equipment will set you back around £90 and the connection about £60.

ADSL ALTERNATIVES

BT's price cuts have forced cable Internet access to find a way of competing with sub £25 a month broadband. One of the ways big players like Telewest and NTL have approached this threat to their market is to raise the speed of their services to new heights. Both firms have recently announced 1Mb products, with NTL's product live and Telewest conducting trials. Check **www.blueyonder.co.uk** and **www.ntl.com** for the latest.

Without doubt the unluckiest group of Net users are those who live in rural areas and can't get ADSL or cable. Sadly, the only real alternatives at present are to have an ISDN line fitted, or opt for an (even more) expensive satellite broadband service. The former option is not only extremely expensive – you pay to rent the line and for calls – but also complicated (see **www.bt.com/isdn** for a breakdown of what's involved). The latter option is only available through a select bunch of providers and while BTopenworld charges £59.99 a month for this type of service, the installation will burn a hole in your wallet about 900 pound coins big.



*See the Broadband map at **www.broadbandmap.co.uk** to find out whether your area can get high speed access. Areas in red are already ADSL-enabled*

PULLING INTO THE FAST LANE

Getting the best results from the Internet and your Net connection is all about marrying performance with efficiency and, hopefully, over the course of the last few pages, we've shown you exactly how this seemingly elusive Internet state of mind can be reached.

If you have a dial-up connection then you're probably better off focussing on the things you can do to your Operating System and PC to boost performance. It's also worth paying special attention to the browsing tips included in this feature – there's simply no substitution to being able to get around the Net quickly.

If, however, you are among the elite group of people that can get broadband then we urge you to sign up for an ADSL connection (cost permitting) as soon as possible. If you're currently an unmetered subscriber the cost of switching will soon be forgotten when you've got 512k of bandwidth to play with. In fact, the only thing you'll be worrying about is how to use it all. Funnily enough, we'll be offering some suggestions in next month's issue of PI.

BROADBAND ISP DEALS AT A GLANCE

Pick the perfect broadband provider with this handy guide

ISP	URL	Product	Type	Installation Cost	Monthly Charge	Speed
BTopenworld	www.btopenworld.com	Plug and Go	ADSL	£150	£29.99	512k
BTopenworld	www.btopenworld.com	Engineer Assisted	ADSL	£250	£29.99	512k
BTopenworld	www.btopenworld.com	Business Satellite	Satellite	£899	£59.99	500k
Freedom2Surf	www.freedom2surf.com	Pure IP 512k	ADSL	£70.49	£22.50	512k
Freeserve	www.freeserve.com	Freeserve Broadband	ADSL	£84.99	£29.99	512k
NTL	www.ntl.com	NTL Broadband	Cable	£75	£34.98	512k
NTL	www.ntl.com	NTL Broadband	Cable	£75	£59.98	1Mb
Pipex	www.pipex.net	Xtreme Solo	ADSL	Free	£23.44	512k
Plus.net	www.plus.net	Home Self Install	ADSL	£58.75	£22.99	512k
Telewest	www.blueyonder.co.uk	Blue Yonder	Broadband	£75	£29.99	512k

* All information correct at time of going to press. Some deals include special offers for existing customers

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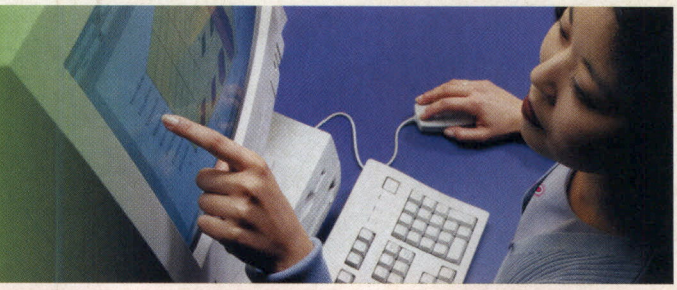

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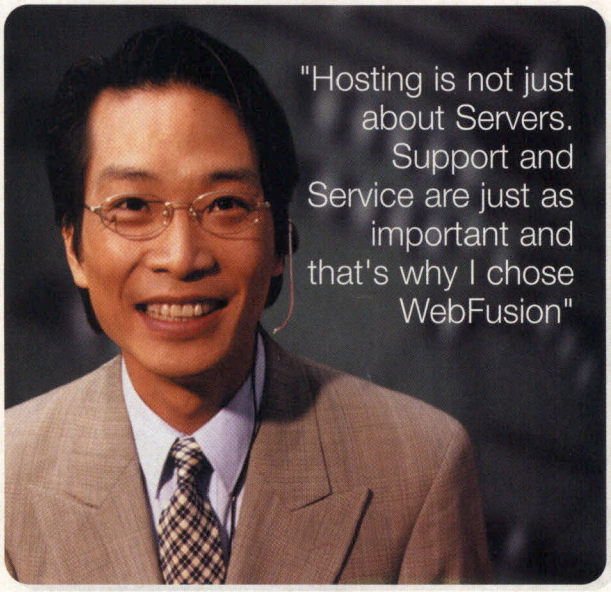

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- Unlimited Mailing Lists • Unlimited Autoresponders
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- Free Use of Secure Server • Miva Scripting Language
- MS FrontPage Extensions • Active Server Pages
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The Virtual Control Panel 2002 (VCP) allows you to automatically control your web site without any knowledge of programming! You can manage your files on-line, install discussion boards and guest books in seconds, take complete control of all your e-mail and password-protect directories. You can even install FrontPage, view web statistics and bandwidth usage figures and read your e-mail on-line if you need to!

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Big Brother is watching you

IT'S THE NET'S NEW EVIL, RIFE IN MUCH OF TODAY'S SOFTWARE, BUT WHAT THE HELL IS SPYWARE? **THOMAS WATSON** GOES UNDERCOVER TO FIND OUT

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Being at the forefront of technology is always pleasing, and there's no reason not to feel chuffed if you have a Windows XP Pentium 4 PC purring away. After all, you've got enough anti-virus software installed to knock out even the biggest Trojan, and you're always perfectly aware of which programs are kicking around on your PC. In short, you've got Fortress Windows just the way you want it. You're perfectly safe and sound from the whims of others. Or are you?

Well, no actually. In fact, there's a new threat lurking below the surface of today's software that uses the latest technology to render most of your safety measures inadequate and obsolete. At present, the technology behind this newest threat is used for mostly harmless means, but there's potential for all kinds of catastrophic surveillance mischief in the future.

What's more, millions of Net punters are already raging at the intrusion to their privacy that this entails. In short, after years of failed prophecies, Big Brother is finally watching you. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the world of spyware.

Keeping it schtum

The concept is devilishly simple. We're all used to 'adware' – pieces of freeware made free by the inclusion of banner ads at points throughout the program. Fair enough, said the public, for no-one minds a bit of advertising if it means we can pick up our favourite programs for nowt. Unfortunately, plain adware has proved too ineffectual for the advertising companies. They want a way of targeting their ads at the right people, a way of finding out what punters want before bombarding them with potentially irrelevant advertising. Thus spyware was born.

This reshapes the whole Internet experience – instead of sending you adverts, the perpetrators of spyware TAKE information from you. Spyware is the equivalent of having the boss of a company sat beside you as you use your PC.

Every minute you're connected to the Web sees a steady stream of information packets sent to companies you didn't even know existed. In effect, the CEO of Fake Company Ltd knows exactly what you do when you're on the Web, even down to the music you download and listen to. Scary stuff.

And we know what you're thinking – if spyware is so bad, don't install any programs that use it. Good thinking Batman, but it's not that easy. The inherent problem with spyware is that you don't know it's there. Did you know, for example, that two of the biggest exponents of spyware are GoZilla and KaZaA? Probably not, which is why people are so irate about the threat of spyware. You've downloaded these high profile freeware utilities in good faith, only to discover that they're spying on your every move.

Bill's gateway to your PC

And it gets worse. Not only have an increasing number of companies jumped on the spyware juggernaut, but an altogether more sinister Big Brother figure is also appearing. It might not surprise the more cynical of you out there, but good old Microsoft has been accused of spyware antics. Arch villain in all of this is the one piece of

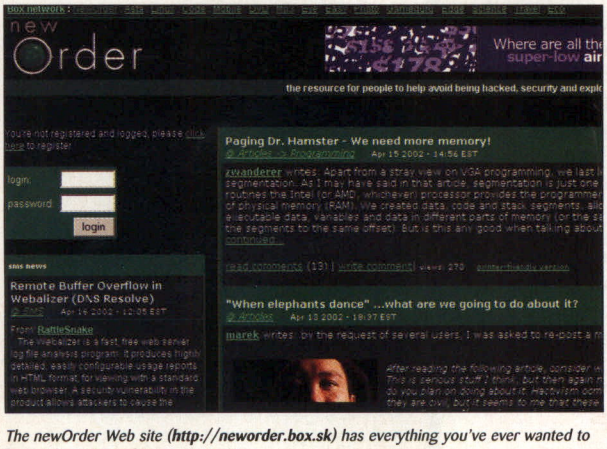
software you should be able to trust, the one utility which should stand proud above such supercilious spying shenanigans.

Yup, Windows XP stands in the dock, accused of using its privileged position to gain information from innocent PC users. Microsoft's case isn't helped by the fact that the whole 'activation' process is an elaborate piece of spyware – every time you connect, Microsoft checks up to see that your copy of XP doesn't conflict with anybody else's.

This would appear to be just the tip of the iceberg, though, because Windows XP is rife with hidden gems like this. And, despite the early claims of some industry pundits, spyware in Windows doesn't relate to the 'send fault report' option which appears when a program crashes – the whole concept of spyware is, after all, that it is subversive, and spies on your actions without you knowing. It's far more worrying to find out that punters have seen XP trying to connect to the Web while performing a local drive search.

Even worse, ExtremeTech (**www.extremetech.com**) recently reported that Media Player 8 may be tracking your DVD viewing habits. Every time you insert a disc, Windows automatically tries to connect in order to pick up metadata relating to the information stored on the DVD. Fair enough.

It has also been suggested, though, that Windows may be assigning a permanent ID to anyone who downloads this metadata, so that you are recognised the next time you insert a disc. This way, Microsoft can build up a database of all the films you watch on your PC. Hardly earth-shattering stuff, but enough to cause the occasional moment of panic.



*The newOrder Web site (**http://neworder.box.sk**) has everything you've ever wanted to know about PC and Internet security*

Spy vs spy

Primarily, spyware is designed to provide advertisers with information that allows them to target their promotions more effectively. And, for the moment, that's virtually its sole use.

Few people enjoy being spied on, though, and a number of groups have sprung up to rally against this invasion of their freedom. The most ardent of campaigners is Steve Gibson,

Well I never!

Programs rife with spyware

KaZaA

www.kazaa.com

Shock! Horror! Our favourite file-sharing agent is actually rife with spyware. It's not the only file sharer to sell its soul to the devil in return for a few gold coins, but the Brilliant Digital Entertainment plug-in (which you have no choice in installing) raised a few eyebrows. Used at the moment for simple ad manipulation, BDE recently admitted in court that it had ambitious plans to develop its program, and use people's machines to host content, and much more.

Windows XP

www.microsoft.com

No round-up of spyware software would be complete without a passing nod to the daddy of snooping – Windows XP. Although fears that the whole OS is an elaborate spying device are largely unfounded, you get the feeling that experts will continue to pick out snippets of info that scare the living daylights out of you.

Go!Zilla

www.gozilla.com

It's a download manager, so you're guaranteed to be connected to the Net. The bods at Go!Zilla realised this, and have sold you down the river via spyware. According to sources, at least this form of spyware only deals with the adverts you click, which isn't as sneaky as it could be.

RealPlayer

www.real.com

RealPlayer sends information to the Real servers on every CD you put into your drive and, like Windows Media Player is rumoured to, assigns you with a unique user identification. To make matters worse, RealPlayer sends information based on how many songs you have on your hard drive and which kind of music you listen to.

whose OptOut program has been designed specifically to remove spyware.

Gibson is head of Gibson Research Corporation, and has devoted much of the last year or so of his highly productive life to bringing it to the public's attention. While he accepts that advertising is a necessary evil of Internet life, he firmly refutes any allegations that spyware has any place in a civilised world.

And just to point out the irritation caused by spyware, he relates on his Web site (**http://grc.com**) an email conversation he had with the Vice President of Marketing of a 'consumer tracking' company. After a fairly mundane opening gambit from Gibson, the marketing man came back with a claim that, "while we might be able to suggest that you like Miles Davis, we know nothing personal about you". Considering Gibson never mentioned this before, you have proof that spyware works.

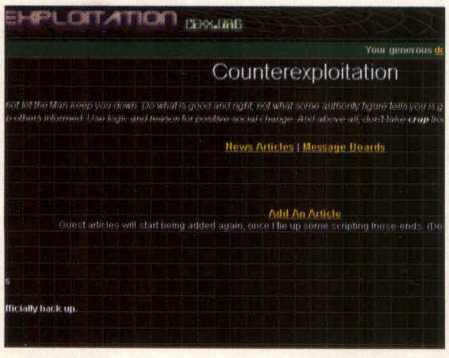
Suffice to say that Steve Gibson was less than chuffed with this state of affairs, and promptly got to work on the only real evidence of a backlash against spyware so far. Known as the 'Code of Backchannel Conduct', this set of seven proposed rules suggests that companies must place an up-front disclosure that their software contains backdoor spyware – so, KaZaA, GoZilla and co would be forced to display something to the effect of 'this program contains spyware' somewhere on a splash screen during the installation process.

"INSTEAD OF SENDING YOU ADVERTS, PERPETRATORS OF SPYWARE TAKE INFO FROM YOU"

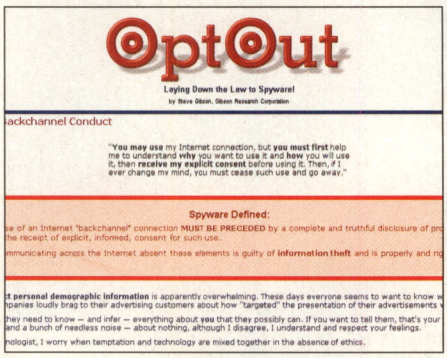
Equally importantly, Gibson is adamant that software and adware companies should only take the most essential of information from you, and should refrain entirely from using 'sneaky' practices wherever possible (**what's wrong with never – Ed**?). As yet, this Code is far from being accepted by anyone, but with 600,000 signed-up members on his site already, Gibson might just have enough allies to pull it off.

Exposing the spies

So, spyware is an irritating and worrying intrusion into your privacy, but what can you do about it? Well, there are two options to save yourself the heartache of realising that Bill Gates is laughing at your taste in music.



For the very latest in spyware information, get along to the CounterExploitation site at ***http://cexx.org***



The OptOut program has been designed especially for hunting down spyware and removing it

Firstly, you can install a firewall to ensure that you're on top of everything that comes in and, more importantly, goes out of your PC. We sometimes get sick of recommending ZoneAlarm to you (**www.zonelabs.com**), but it's the only free firewall which offers anything like the features of the expensive biggies – and obviously freeware means freeware here, as a firewall which propagated spyware would be so ironic as to be off the scale. Anyway, while ZoneAlarm hasn't been designed for spyware, it will handle it well.

On the other hand, you could opt for one of the new 'spysnare' programs now available. As we've already mentioned, Steve Gibson personally wrote the OptOut program based on his own experiences, and it worked wonders for some 2.5 million users. Ever one for a grand gesture, Gibson then puzzlingly removed this useful utility from the Web totally, and, unfortunately, it's now, gone the same way as the wooly mammoth.

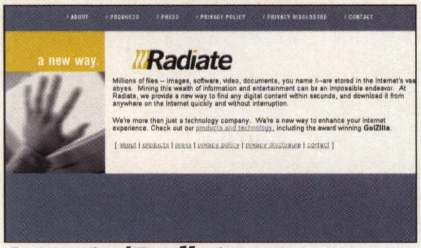
The spy-catching mantle has been taken on by Lavasoft, whose AdAware product was featured in last month's *Practical Internet* (and is on the CD this issue). With startling ease of use, this is the spysnare program of choice among the elite out there. Load it up, set it running, and it will search your hard drive for any instances of rogue connection-causers. You'll be amazed how many spyware files you have on your machine – we did a quick check and discovered that we had nearly 90 of the bleeders.

Thankfully, none of these files were particularly worrying, as spyware is currently only used for advertising purposes. But the very fact that you can't use your own PC without advertising types checking up on you is hardly an inspiring thought. And if they can do this today, who knows what unsrcupulous software developers will be using spyware for in the future?

After all the claims of the emancipating qualities of the Net, could we witness one of man's greatest technologies turned into a secret surveillance tool? Watch out, Big Brother might just be watching you after all. ■

What do you think about the menace of spyware? Send your opinions, no matter how frank, to **pi@aragon.co.uk** and we'll print the best of the bunch.

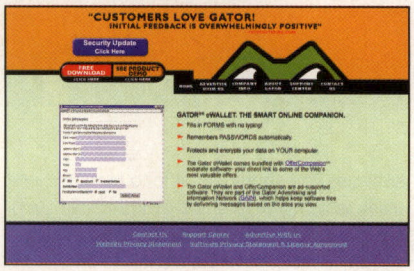
Spyware's biggest villains



Aureate/Radiate

www.radiate.com

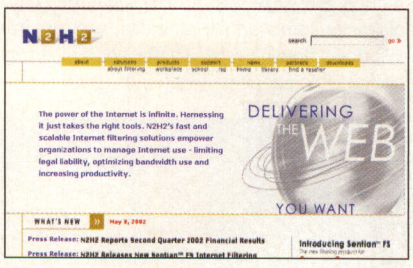
The daddy of unwanted Internet marketing, the chances are you've used at least one program which links to the Aureate/Radiate servers. The concept so far is that it bombards you with as many adverts as it possibly can, including some extremely sought-after 640x480 ads. Some people have been known to suffer from browser and connection problems due to these plug-ins, but Aureate/Radiate makes it into our mini-list mainly on account of its ubiquity.



Gator

www.gator.com

Grrrr. Gator is that really annoying utility that you don't ever recall installing. That's because you didn't, and it sneaked its way in on the back of something much more useful. Not only is it irritating, but it's not much use to you either. "Customers love Gator!," says the Gator Web site. We don't – please make it go away.



Bess

www.n2h2.com

In a truly heart-warming tale, N2H2 provided a huge number of US schools with filtering software, known as Bess – meaning some 15 million US children were using the package. Fine so far, until N2H2 decided to start selling the information collected by its filtering servers. Spyware that preys on children and sells their browsing habits to unscrupulous advertisers – makes you proud to be human, doesn't it?

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www.v21.co.uk

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0800 089 2121

I want my FTP

THANKS TO THE EXPLOSION IN FILE-SHARING, FTP HAS FOUND ITSELF BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT. **NICK SWEENEY** DISCOVERS WHY ONE OF THE NET'S OLDEST TECHNOLOGIES HAS SUDDENLY BECOME FASHIONABLE AGAIN

Peer-to-peer networking might dominate the headlines – and the law courts – but the hype surrounding file-sharing from sites such as KaZaA and Gnutella forgets one big thing – people have been swapping files across the Internet for decades, without any need for these newfangled networks. After all, the Internet was invented to share computing resources and, for the most part, that means sharing files. That's why, as the legal squeeze tightens on newer systems, Net users are slowly rediscovering a part of the Internet that held sway for over 20 years: the original (and some would say it's still the best) File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

Sure, FTP doesn't have the shiny edges and sexy reputation of the new kids on the block, but don't write it off as a digital relic. Get to grips with the protocol and you'll not only enjoy faster, more reliable downloads from everyday browsing, but you'll also be able to make the most of a huge range of public FTP archives, and have the chance of getting up close and personal to an even bigger network of unofficial and not strictly legal sites. Yes, it's another trip to the Internet underground: the places that even the Napster crew fear to tread...

If you think about it, everything that happens on the Net is just data being swapped between computers. Trouble is, the basic Internet protocols aren't always good at ensuring every bit of data reaches its destination, and they certainly don't check whether it makes sense when it arrives. That's why much of the earliest, geekiest days of international networking was spent devising a way to allow computers using different Operating Systems and data formats to share files in a reliable, efficient way. The File Transfer Protocol (FTP) was designed to do just this. Launched in 1973 and developed over the next decade, it remained the most popular way to access online material well into the 1990s, until the emergence of the first graphical Web browsers changed the character of the online world forever. (If you're interested in the science bit, check the timeline at **www.wu-ftpd.org/rfc**.)

What is FTP?

Like most things on the Net, FTP works through what's known as a 'client-server' model. In simple terms, this means that a permanently running 'server' program on one computer listens for incoming login requests from 'client' programs. (Your Web browser is a client, as is

your email program.) Once connected, the FTP client lets users browse shared folders and transfer files to and from the server. In the modern online world, dominated by Web traffic and peer-to-peer networks, FTP may look rather dated, but it has one big advantage – it's universal. Its basic workings have been set in stone since 1985, which means that it has a smaller risk of falling victim to viruses or malicious 'Trojan Horse' programs, and it's free of the spyware and surreptitious resource-hogging that's become a common feature of P2P programs such as KaZaA. Compared to the P2P networks, it also offers users much greater control over who gets to look inside your hard drive.

You can access FTP sites with an ordinary Web browser and Windows even comes with an old-fashioned command-line program. For better results, though, you'll need to install a dedicated application, which will allow you to store the addresses of sites, schedule downloads, and resume broken transfers. There are dozens of suitable programs, but if you're just starting out with FTP, a freeware client such as LeechFTP or WS_FTP LE (**www.ipswitch.com**) will do just fine. These programs model themselves on Windows Explorer, allowing you to connect to remote sites and transfer files just as if you were moving them between folders on your own PC.

Legal FTP

Nowadays, most Net users tend to resort to FTP simply to upload files to their personal Web sites. It's a task for which the protocol is perfectly suited, but it's only one side of the story. In the days before the Web, FTP was the main way to download programs, and it's still one of the smartest, most reliable ways to grab files from the Net. There's a simple reason for this: the Web was only ever designed to transfer small, Web-page sized documents, rather than multi-megabyte files. That's why most people have suffered from having to start a huge download from scratch, normally on a dodgy dial-up line, just because the browser crashes or the connection times out. You can avoid this annoyance by using an FTP client rather than your browser to fetch files which have a '**ftp://**' URL, because the protocol allows you to pause and resume downloads, and pick up broken connections from where you left off. The newest generation of programs, such as BitBeamer (**www.bitbeamer.com**), even let you automatically pass these downloads from your Web browser to the FTP client.

So, what's on offer? Well, the FTP sites of most major hardware and software companies →

TOP 10 Legal FTP Sites

Swap files without fear of breaking da law

1 ftp.cdrom.com
The Walnut Creek FTP site, a motherlode of shareware, freeware and software upgrades.

2 ftp.sunsite.org.uk
The British incarnation of the huge SunSITE repository: look here for fast downloads of browsers and other software.

3 ftp.idsoftware.com
Doom, Quake and everything first-person shooter. Grab game servers, mod packs and the latest updates.

4 ftp.zedz.net
This famed Dutch site provides encryption tools and plug-ins for email, file protection and stenography. Ideal for the paranoid user.

5 ftp.ibiblio.org
The original SunSITE, now renamed, is a vast Aladdin's Cave of software, documentation and reference material

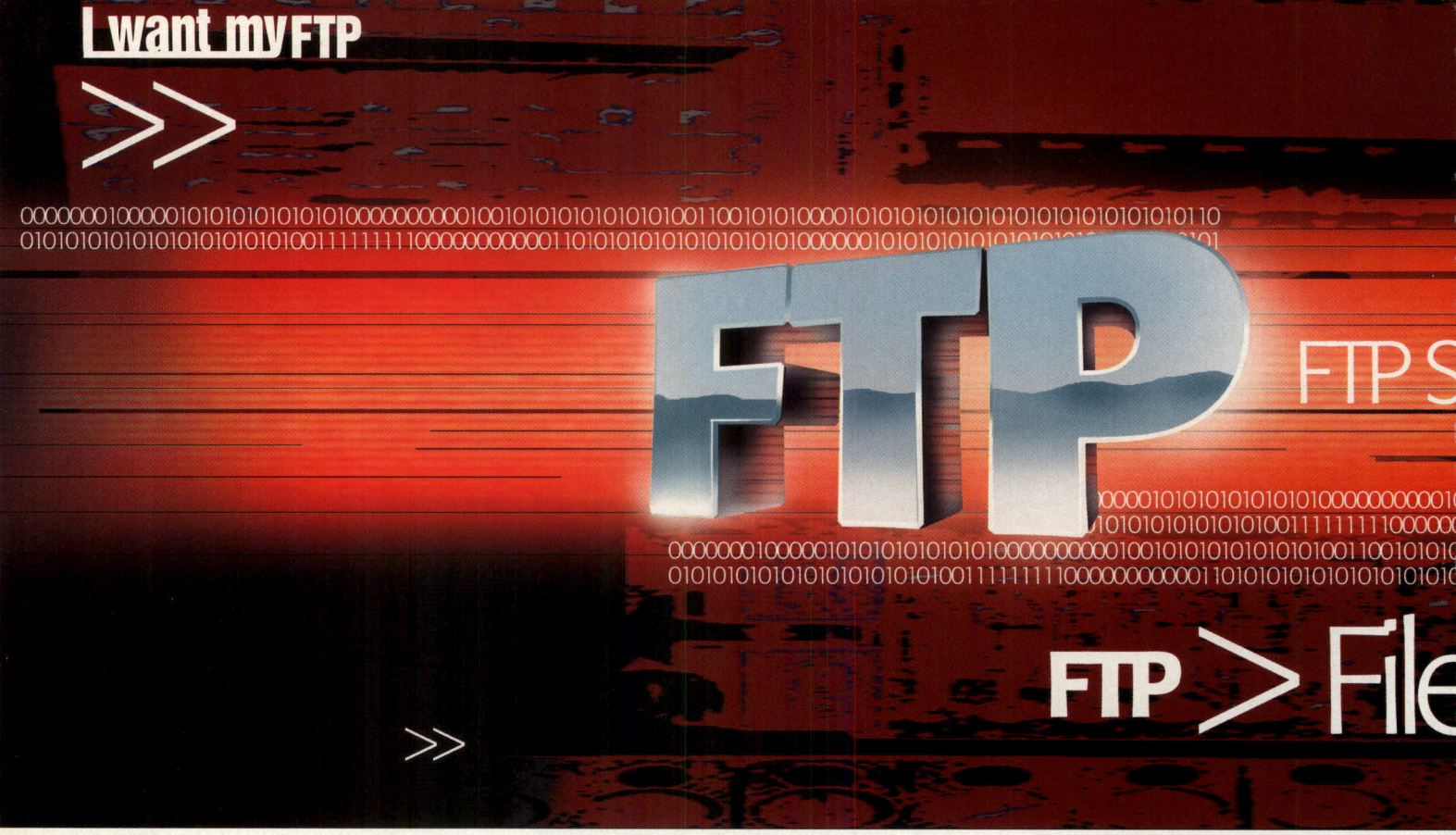
6 ftp.mirror.ac.uk
The UK's academic mirror service provides versions of around 100 key FTP sites. Not just for students, either.

7 ftp.simtel.net
Another huge repository for shareware and freeware applications and utilities, that you'll find mirrored around the world.

8 ftp.gamesdomain.com
A compendium for gamers, with hundreds of free demos, cheats, tips, patches and shareware downloads

9 ftp.seds.lpl.arizona.edu
Astronomy has always had a strong FTP presence. This site contains the world's biggest archive of space images.

10 ftp.amug.org
Everything Macintosh. Shareware, freeware, contributed files, system tools and site mirrors of all the best Mac stuff.



are often the best place to find files and associated documents related to their products. If you're looking for something specific, such as a driver or a program update, you'll usually be able to grab it with FTP rather than having to plough through the relevant Web site. For instance, you'll find updates and patches to id Software's Quake and Doom at **ftp.idsoftware.com**, and the latest versions of WinZip, including beta versions, are easily downloadable from **ftp.winzip.com**.

Public eye

These company sites are a useful first port of call, but the true value of FTP becomes apparent when you look at the various public archives and repositories that collect up a vast range of freely-downloadable Net-related files. Most of these sites, such as iBiblio (**ftp.ibiblio.org**) and SunSITE UK (**ftp.sunsite.org.uk**) have been around since before the Web, gathering everything from software and cartoons to classic literature, courtesy of Project Gutenberg (**www.promo.net/pg**). All of these sites offer what's known as 'anonymous' FTP: that is, you don't have to have a user account on the server to download files. Standard 'Netiquette' suggests that you supply an email address so that server administrators can track where users come from, but we wouldn't blame you if you'd rather leave a fake address, or one to an account that you don't use too often.

The biggest advantage of these multi-gigabyte archive sites is that they provide what's known as 'mirrors' – regularly updated copies of the most popular FTP sites around the world. Mirror sites hark back to the days when a local network connection was essential for fast, cheap file transfers. They're still especially useful for users on dial-up connections, or when a foreign site is hard to reach or overwhelmed with Net traffic. The UK's dedicated mirroring server (**ftp.mirror.ac.uk**) provides the contents of over 100 other sites, including Microsoft, Netscape and Adobe, and is updated on a nightly basis. So if you find ordinary Web-based downloads run at a snail's pace, it's worth checking to see whether you can download a copy from a local FTP mirror. While there's no FTP equivalent to Google for seeking out material, you'll find that AllTheWeb (**www.alltheweb.com**) comes close, especially if you have a decent idea of the specific names of the files you're looking for.

Ordinary users can also benefit from FTP mirroring, as a simple way to keep personal Web sites up-to-date. Simply prepare your site in a folder on your PC and use your FTP application to replicate it on your ISP or Web host's server. Most clients will even allow you to schedule updates, so that you don't waste browsing bandwidth on file transfers. Keeping a local copy also makes it easy to restore things if the worst happens, and your carefully-crafted site falls victim to an accidental deletion or hard drive failure.

Illegal FTP

So, we've established that there's a lot of free stuff out there in the world of FTP. Where things get really interesting, though, is when you leave the well-known archives behind and take a look at the smaller, underground sites devoted to sharing files in a way that's, let's say, not strictly legal. You won't find reference to them on the Web. Or, rather, if you do, chances are they're no longer there. Working from frequently-changing Internet addresses, often out of college halls and private homes, they make up a forgotten, fly-by-night area of the Net that most new users don't even know exists. Think of the speakeasies in the 1920s that allowed booze-starved Americans to drink in secret; or the

Beyond **Explorer**

Why Internet Explorer's not the smartest choice for FTP users

WE OUGHT TO give Microsoft some credit: it's done a fair bit to make Internet Explorer cope better with FTP transfers. For very limited tasks, it's not that bad; you can certainly use it if you only want to upload the odd file to your Web site. You can even drag and drop files between the server and your PC. For heavy-duty work, though, it just doesn't cut it. There's no support for scheduled file transfers or site mirroring, and the Favorites menu isn't the best place to store a list of FTP sites. Most crucial of all, IE won't allow you to pause and resume transfers, or restart one when the connection has been broken. This facility is built into FTP for a reason: big downloads on flaky dial-up links often time out. Worst of all, if your browser crashes (it's been known to happen, often) it'll bring down any ongoing file transfers. So, if you're seriously into FTP, get a tool that suits the job.

ECRETS REVEALED

File Transfer Protocol

e Transfer Protocol

unlicensed betting shops of the 50s and 60s, that let Brits have a flutter before gambling became legal, and you'll get the idea: these are the online haunts where you need to know where to look before you find them.

Why bother with FTP, then, if you have to jump through hoops just to gain access to sites? The answer's simple: the harder you have to work, the juicier the prize. So while you'll need persistence and a willingness to do some 'social engineering', you'll end up with access to files that aren't available on the public P2P networks: bootleg movies, live recordings, pre-release albums and beta software. The servers offering these most sought-after files are known as 'zero-day' sites, because they provide access to files from the moment they become officially available. Or even sooner – bootleg tracks from the latest Oasis album were released online over FTP three months ahead of schedule. And to get access to zero-day material, it's usually not even sufficient to hang around public IRC channels: the people who run the servers will often have their own private chat servers to keep out the riff-raff.

"THINGS GET INTERESTING WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE UNDERGROUND SITES DEVOTED TO SHARING FILES"

The long arm of the law

We don't need to tell you that most of what's on offer in these underground FTP servers is not particularly kosher. As with all file-sharing networks, exchanging copyrighted material without permission is illegal. While plenty of FTP sites deal in material that wouldn't normally draw the attention of the authorities, such as MP3s of live concert recordings or videos of US shows such as *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, we'd be lying if we didn't say that the majority of material available is at best of dodgy legal status, and at worst the kind of stuff people get locked up for having on their hard drives.

Downloading big files with FTP is unlikely to raise the attention of your ISP if you're on a commercial provider. (Academic networks are more careful about what passes through their wires.) Running your own server, on the other hand, is much more questionable. While a tightly-controlled FTP server with strictly limited bandwidth will usually go unnoticed, it's likely to contravene your ISP's terms and conditions, like all unauthorised servers. There's a good reason for this – FTP servers are a favourite target of malicious crackers, because they can open up an entire network to exploitation. Servers that allow anonymous access are playing with fire: it's really not recommended on a home PC. Finally, install a FTP server of any kind on an academic network, and you risk at least the loss of computing facilities, and at worst, expulsion. (Believe us, it's happened.)

Finding FTP sites

The big question, then: if these sites are so hard to find, how do you get into them? Well, don't bother using your Web browser. Instead, you need to roll up your sleeves and dive into the low-tech, text-only world of chatrooms and instant messaging. The vast majority of underground FTP sites are publicised through the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) network, in channels devoted to the files they serve. Install a client such as mIRC (**www.mirc.co.uk**) or the multi-featured Trillian messenger (**www.trillian.cc**), and you'll find dozens of European chat servers, each hooked up to a global network of users. Invariably, the well-used channels aren't devoted to discussions of Greek philosophy, but instead are packed with people searching for the latest software, MP3s, bootleg movies, and anything else that can be →

Desperately seeking FTPs:

What an FTP file-sniffer can get up to in just one evening

PRACTICAL INTERNET SPOKE to a FTP user to find out just how difficult gaining access to underground FTP sites can be and what people can expect to find. Pulse – he didn't want to give his real name – explains below.

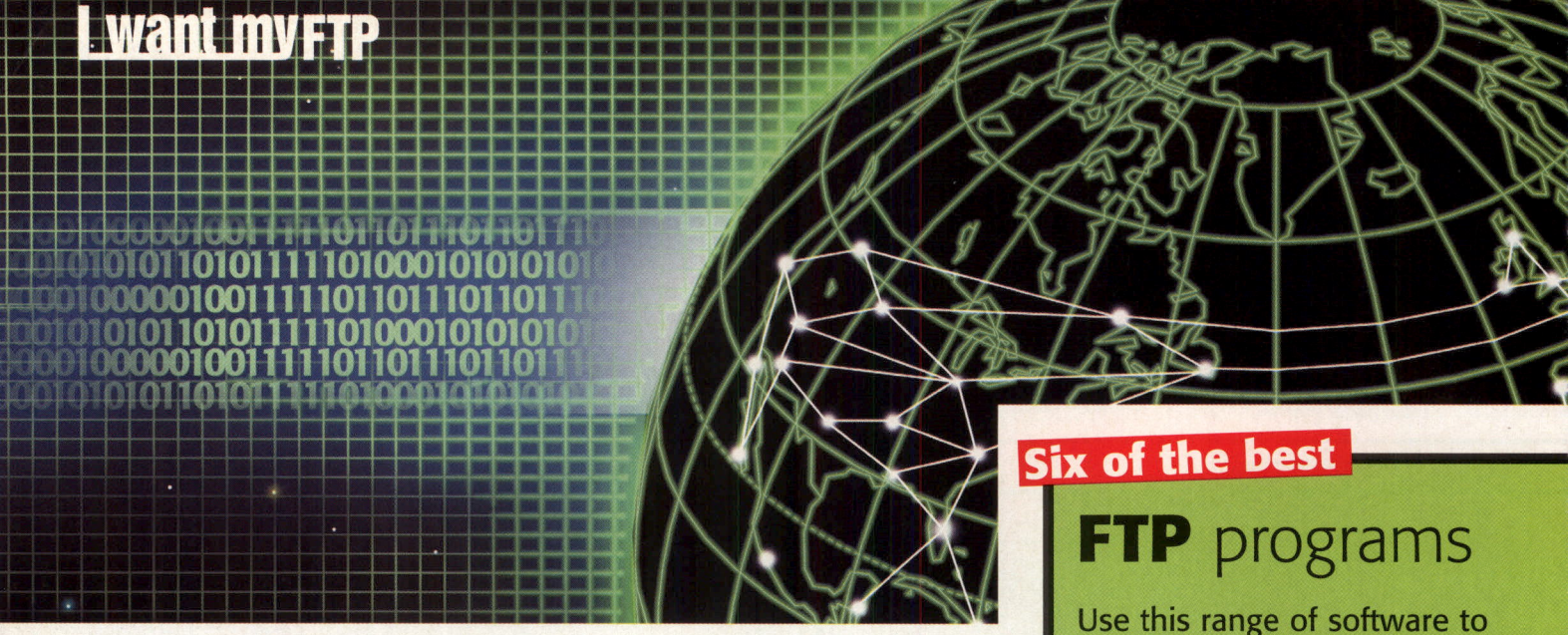
Bear in mind that downloading copyrighted material from the Net is highly illegal and you do so at your own risk.

6:00PM Fire up Google. Not for FTP servers, as by the time they're linked on the Web, they won't work. Instead, I'm looking for the home pages of IRC channels that provide 'zero-day' FTP servers for episodes of *24*, fresh from the USA.

6:30PM Found links to a couple of IRC channels based on the DALnet network. Launch the Trillian chat client, and try to join them. One's invite only, the other's open. Copying the list of FTP servers that's posted to the channel. Time to launch LeechFTP.

6:45PM What I call 'knocking at the door': most sites are busy. I'll get banned if I try to login too frequently, so limiting it to every 30 seconds. Finally get into a couple: one wants me to sign up with a casino site before I can get a download password. No thanks. The other is read-only, but has a wish-list of requests that'll get me access if I upload them. Check my MP3 stash, find a couple, and ICQ the FTP site owner to ask for a password.

8:00PM ICQ flashes. It's the FTP owner, asking what I want to download. We chat for a bit about the program, he gives me a login and password, and I'm set to upload my files. Fingers crossed I won't get dumped once I'm finished...

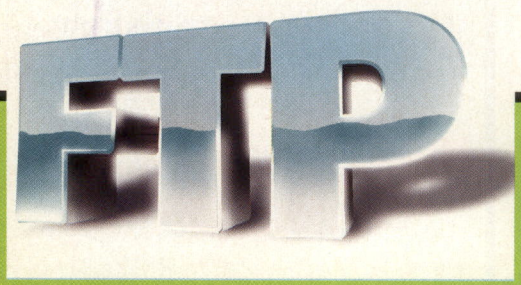


sent along a cable. These channels are run by moderators who provide regularly updated links to the FTP servers currently serving files, usually specifying the times they'll be online and what is required in order to gain access.

There's the catch. Unlike P2P networks, such as FastTrack and Gnutella, most FTP sites publicised over IRC don't give you the automatic ability to download files – you have to earn it. Often, you'll be allowed to login for a tempting peek at the contents of the server and asked to download a request list or a set of instructions to get downloading rights. The reason for this is simple: site owners can't afford to have their servers hammered by the demand for files, and have resorted to all sorts of schemes to make some money from their shady activities. Nowadays, many sites promise access to the latest and greatest files in exchange for signing up to casino and porn sites. Needless to say, most of these are underwritten by spammers and some are outright scams, which can turn out to be an expensive indulgence. If you do feel tempted (and we don't recommend it), create a free Webmail account that you won't use for regular email. In fact, you can usually tell the genuine (if no less shady) sites because they'll simply have a list of requests in return for a 'leech' account with unlimited downloading rights, or have a 'ratio' system, where you're allowed to download a certain number of files in exchange for the ones you upload. Standard practice, if you're prepared to trade files, is to send an email or instant message to the site owner and agree on a fair exchange. Yes, we know it sounds more like *Miami Vice*, but that's the way the underside of the Internet works.

Welcome to the club

Getting the hang of FTP is rather like taking a trip down Memory Lane. In essence, you have to learn how people downloaded files before the advent of the Web, and how they shared files before Napster. This isn't just a historical curiosity – in the rush to embrace Web protocols and invent P2P networks, many users forgot just why FTP was so good at handling large file transfers. Thankfully, a die-hard following has preserved the great public archives, as well as sustaining an (admittedly shady) culture of file-sharing based upon 'share and share alike', rather than anonymously siphoning the contents of someone's hard drive. In a way, the FTP community is enjoying a renaissance. Largely abandoned by the masses over the last few years, FTP's user base has reverted to something like the way it was before the heady days of the mid-90s. So fire up that FTP client with pride – it's a sign you belong to an exclusive club.



Set up your **own FTP** site

Start an FTP revolution of your own and set up a site

ALLOWING PEOPLE TO upload and download files to your machine with FTP is trickier than simply installing a P2P file-sharing program, but it's not reserved for the uber-geeks, especially now that many people have broadband connections. (We don't recommend it for dial-up users. Save your bandwidth for Web browsing.) You'll need to install and configure a server program: Microsoft provides one with Windows XP, but you're probably best to use a small, easily-configurable one such as War-FTPd. Once it's up and running, you'll need to create user accounts. As we've already said, anonymous access is just asking for trouble. Place the files that you want to share in a separate folder, preferably on its own partition for security reasons, and Bob's your uncle. Lastly, remember that your ISP may regard any kind of server as a breach of your service agreement – proceed with extreme caution.

Six of the best

FTP programs

Use this range of software to cater for all your FTP needs

1 FTP Voyager
www.rhinosoft.com
A powerful Windows-based FTP client, with a simple interface reminiscent of Windows Explorer, this is the Rolls Royce of FTP clients. Voyager lets you resume broken downloads, update a Web site with just one click and even search for FTP sites.

2 FlashFXP
www.flashfxp.com
Shareware client FlashFXP's selling point is that it allows 'FXP' transfers, which move files between two remote sites without them ever touching the user's local machine. It also handles scheduled downloads and lets you mirror entire folders.

3 BitBeamer
www.bitbeamer.com
BitBeamer is LeechFTP's big brother: a next-generation FTP client that offers users download management, scheduled transfers and file synchronisation. It also includes a search client and provides access to OpenNap MP3-sharing networks.

4 Trillian
www.trillian.cc
Finding FTP sites usually requires a chat client. Trillian is the pick of the bunch, doing the job of a handful of other programs providing IRC alongside all major instant messaging services. Did we mention that it's free as well?

5 War-FTPd
www.jgaa.com
If you're going to run your own server, you could do a lot worse than this highly configurable program. A straightforward interface allows you to control user accounts, bandwidth rates and file access.

6 Fetch
www.fetchsoftworks.com
As with many Mac programs, there's one FTP client that's head and shoulders above the rest. The much-loved Fetch is a powerful, scriptable application which handles file synchronisation, secure logins and management of Web uploads.

TO USE ADSL YOU MUST HAVE A BT LINE AND BE CONNECTED TO AN ADSL ENABLED EXCHANGE. *YOU WILL ALSO REQUIRE AN ADSL MODEM AND A MICRO FILTER. THESE CAN BE PURCHASED FROM PIPEX OR FROM MOST COMPUTER STORES. FULL DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE. DETAILS ARE CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS. E&OE.

SITE TEST

Super-fly sites

SERIOUSLY CHEAP FLIGHTS CAN BE YOURS WITH JUST A FEW CLICKS OF YOUR MOUSE. **NIK TAYLOR** JETS OFF ONTO THE NET TO FIND OUT WHICH TRAVEL SITE IS THE BEST FOR BARGAINS

There are a few things you can guarantee will happen when you go on your summer holiday. Firstly, the weather in Britain will suddenly soar into the 90s. Next, the Spanish air-traffic controllers will cause chaos, deciding it's been far too long since they last had a strike. Finally, once you eventually arrive, you'll meet some git who gleefully informs you he paid £200 less than you for exactly the same holiday.

Well, we can't help you with the vagaries of the British climate or Iberian airport staff, but what we can do is give you a little help with the final problem, so that you too can annoy previously happy holiday-makers with tales of how you booked your holiday for less than the cost of a week in Butlins. The Internet is positively heaving with bargains for the bucket-and-spade brigade, with an enormous selection of Web sites around offering flights and packages for next to nothing.

The reason for this is that it costs airlines and travel companies very little to sell flights on the Net. So, they're most keen to do business this way, and will offer you much better deals than you might find in the high street. Flights have become particularly cheap thanks to the Internet, with several airlines setting up their own sales sites – most notably the no-frills likes of easyJet, Ryanair and Go. Other sites act as online travel agents, flogging off excess flights and holidays for a song. It's finding these great deals that can be a problem, which is where we come in. Over the next few pages we'll dig up the best cheap flight sites the Net has to offer, so you can sort yourself a top-notch summer holiday.

Go

www.go-fly.co.uk

IT'S EASY TO sum up Go's Web site in one word – basic. From the main page you're just presented with a few search forms to help you find exactly the flight you're after. There's no messing about with extras – Go is a bargain-basement airline and it sells flights and nothing else. This is a refreshing change and makes the site dead easy to use. You're able to choose from 23 European destinations, with the airline flying to a wider variety of countries than rivals such as Ryanair. Bear in mind, however, that if you snap up your tickets from Go then you'll have to fly from Stansted. The main minus point comes in the pricing category. Considering the budget-feel of the Web site, and Go's firm entrenchment in the no-frills airline camp, it's not unreasonable to expect flight prices to be a little lower than they are.

Choose from 23 European destinations at Go

The verdict

Range of flights:	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★☆
Extras:	★★☆☆☆
Overall percentage:	**78%**

✔ Good range of flights

✖ Prices bettered by others

Cheapflights.com

www.cheapflights.com

WHOEVER CAME UP with the name of this site has sold it a little short, as Cheapflights.com offers users much more than just flights. Click onto this home page and you'll find a whole plethora of links to package holidays, skiing breaks and cruises. On top of this link-fest, you can also unearth information on useful extras such as car hire and travel insurance. Although this all sounds great, the thing is the site doesn't actually sell any of this itself, and is basically a price comparison effort. For instance, if you're after flights then you just tap in the details and Cheapflights looks for your best option. Unfortunately, this feature is underwhelming to say the least, with only a small number of prices appearing in the search results. Infinitely more useful is the wide variety of links on offer. Contacts for pretty much every useful travel site, airline and travel agent can be found here, making Cheapflights worth a click.

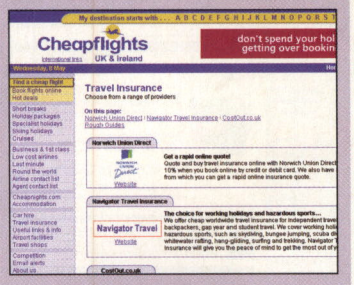
The verdict

Range of flights:	★★☆☆☆
Value for money	★★★☆☆
Extras:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	**69%**

✔ Plenty of travel links

✖ Flight search is poor

A lack of cheap flights is this site's Achilles heel

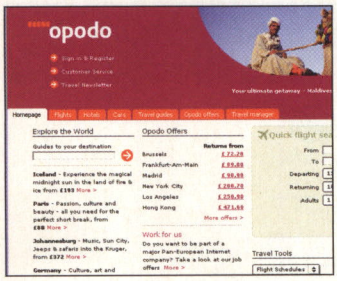


Information is included on extras like insurance

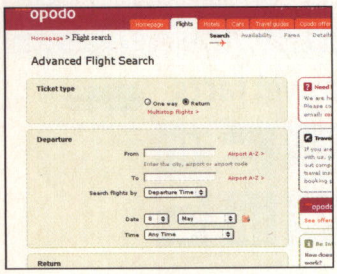
Opodo

www.opodo.co.uk

THIS NEW SITE is managing to cause quite a bit of a ruckus in the world of air travel, mainly because it has been set up by a collaboration of nine major European airlines. When it launched in January of this year, its rivals feared that Opodo would benefit from a touch of cheaper-priced nepotism from its high-flying parent companies. Such fears look to be unfounded (it's still possible to find cheaper prices elsewhere), but Opodo has quickly established itself as a genuine player in the online travel business and is now the third most popular travel site in the UK, after Expedia and LastMinute. The interface is pleasingly simple to use, and you can quickly search through ticket prices from 480 airlines. Should you hit any problems, you can always make use of the call-back service on the site. Just hit the button and one of Opodo's staff will call you back to discuss your specific requirements. Overall, this a simple site, although the search results can be a little hit and miss.



Prices are dirt cheap, thanks to a little nepotism



Opodo's search engine isn't the best we've tried

The verdict

Range of flights:	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★★
Extras:	★★★☆☆
Overall percentage:	**74%**

✔ Very easy to use

✖ Search results can be disappointing

Bargainholidays.com

www.bargainholidays.com

LOOKING LIKE THE epitome of cheap'n'cheerful, bargainholidays.com bursts onto your monitor in a blaze of yellow, orange and red. The whole emphasis of the site is on getting as much as possible for as few pennies as you can muster, with everything from package holidays to car hire going for a pittance. Like Cheapflights.com, this is a price comparison site rather than an out-and-out travel agent. However, unlike Cheapflights.com, this site has a useable interface and quickly comes up with some smart deals. The front page boasts that Bargainholidays.com is Britain's number one online travel store, and the contents of the site are certainly impressive. One of the most useful links for those after a cheap break is the under £99 section. Have a browse through here and you'll instantly find links to a stack of flights for under a ton. Impressively, the site also carries a huge array of extras to keep you occupied.

The verdict

Range of flights:	★★★☆☆
Value for money	★★★★☆
Extras:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	**81%**

✔ Cheap package holidays

✖ Small choice of flights

Bargainholidays boasts over two million deals

More a price comparison site than travel agents

Buying your holiday

IT'S NOT JUST bargain flights that are available on the Net – the Web is also bursting at the seams with cheapo holidays. Forget the old days of spending hours sat in front of Teletext, waiting for a decent deal to appear – you can now dig up some proper bargains in just a couple of minutes. The best way to ensure you get a cracking price on your holiday is, as ever, to go for a package. All year round, the likes of bargainholidays, lastminute and expedia are overflowing with weeks away to the Med for rock-bottom prices. Of course, if you're prepared to hold off booking until just a couple of days before you want to go, then you'll do even better. Online prices of under £150 for a week in the sun are not uncommon if you're prepared to be flexible with when you want to travel.

Get the right deal

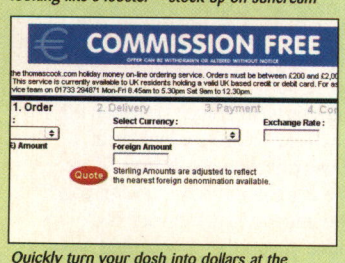
THERE'S NO DOUBT that travel sales have been one of the most popular sectors of online shopping. And, because of that popularity, every travel agent and his dog have launched onto the Web with their own sites. This is good in a way, because it means there is plenty of choice – but it can give you a bit of a headache. After all, with so many sites to choose from, how do you know if you've got the best deal? Well, if you don't want to trawl through hundreds of links, you could always try a price comparison site. Some of the sites featured on these pages (such as Cheapflights.com) serve such a purpose, and will present you with a range of different deals. You'll find the budget airlines don't show up in these comparisons though, so be sure to take a look at those sites as well. Before you snap up any tickets, also try looking at **www.priceline.co.uk**. This offers the novel approach of giving you the chance to name your own price. If your bid is accepted, you could end up with a nice bargain.

Get your extras

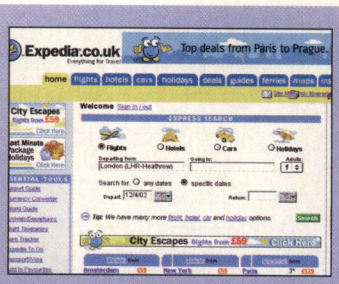
GETTING ORGANISED FOR your holiday is more than just a question of remembering to dig your passport out of your bottom drawer. Before you jet off, don't forget to sort out all the necessities such as travel insurance. You'll find all the flight and holiday-selling sites offer their own policies, but you'll often save a few quid by declining this and doing a quick Google search for your own.

You can also sort out your foreign money online. Try clicking onto **www.thomascook.co.uk**, and you'll find a link to the foreign exchange. Here you can snap up as many Euros as you need, and have them delivered direct to your door. Next up, it's time to get the essentials. That delicate British skin can be spared a roasting by nipping over to **www.wellbeing.com** (the Web site for Boots), to get yourself some suncream. Then, get a book for the beach with a quick visit to **www.amazon.co.uk**. All that's left to do is pack the suitcase and make sure you remember that passport.

Make sure you don't come back from your hols looking like a lobster – stock up on suncream



Quickly turn your dosh into dollars at the Thomas Cook foreign exchange



Expedia is the UK's most popular travel site

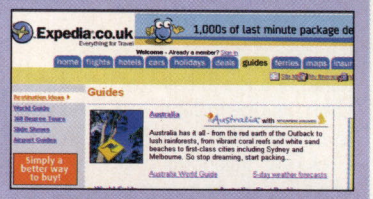
Everything is covered in admirable depth

Recommended

Expedia.co.uk

www.expedia.co.uk

THIS IS THE click of choice for the nation's holiday-dreaming office workers, as well as being the most popular travel site in the UK. Expedia covers everything in admirable depth, with the flights section being just one of many, including holiday guides, package deals and insurance. If you're just looking to travel around Europe then you're likely to find a better deal with one of the no-frills efforts. However, if your sights are set a little further afield, then you'll find Expedia a very handy site indeed. It can dig up flights anywhere around the world, with a raft of results displayed clearly with the cheapest at the top. There are a range of search facilities you can make use of, which makes it easier to find what you're after.



Useful holiday guides make choosing a deal easy

The verdict

Range of flights:	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
Extras:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	**82%**

✔ Loads of flights outside Europe

✖ Can be pricey

buzz

www.buzzaway.com

BUZZ IS BASED around the idea that, although most people want to get where they're going for the cheapest price possible, some are happy to pay a little more for a few luxuries. So, the price you're quoted on the Web site is for the bare bones flight and nowt else. You then get the option to upgrade your booking by snapping up a couple of extras such as an in-flight meal, the use of a departure lounge or car hire. This is another airline site, so the only flights you'll find here are buzz's own. That means you'll be able to choose from 21 destinations around Europe, with most of those located in France. The site is fairly easy to use, and prices are impressive – but availability is inevitably limited.

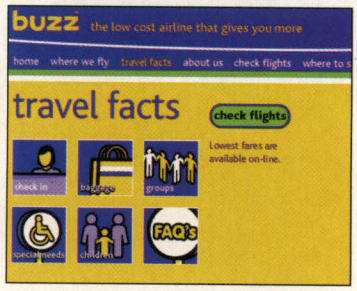
The prices at Buzz will make you drool, but availability is limited

The verdict

Range of flights:	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
Extras:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	**75%**

✔ Neat idea

✖ Limited range

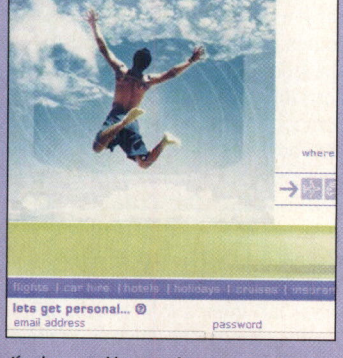


Buzz is strongly biased towards French locations

Deckchair.com

www.deckchair.com

HE MIGHT NOT like Mondays, but don't even get scruffy 80s icon Sir Bob Geldof started on travel sites. The ex-Boomtown Rat is the man behind Deckchair.com, and in an introductory rant to the travel portal, he says he started it up because all the other flight-booking services were too irritating. Presumably, this service doesn't get on his nerves then – although that's a little surprising, because it's a right pain to use. This is a shame, because there appears to be a good range of flights here with some decent prices to be had. It's just that getting hold of them in the first place is a thoroughly confusing business. The links at the top of the page appear to point to stacks of extras, although on closer inspection these turn out to simply be a bunch of links.



If only we could escape the site's poor design...

Bob Geldof is Deckchair's high profile backer

The verdict

Range of flights:	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
Extras:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	**70%**

✔ Useful search facility

✖ Horrible to use

Lastminute.com

www.lastminute.com

THIS BASTION OF the old days of dot-com hype is perhaps still best-known for its cheap deals on travel. Lastminute.com may have diversified a little since the days when Martha Lane-Fox was a household name, but flight sales still make up an important part of its business. Small wonder, since the site offers a huge number to choose from, taking in destinations from all over the world. The colour scheme is unlikely to be to your taste unless you're a fan of the sort of décor favoured by Elton John, but the search engine itself does a grand job. We decided to put it to the test with a search for a return flight to Kilimanjaro Airport, and the site quickly came up with not just one but a choice of flights for the days we specified. Lastminute.com negotiates special deals with certain airlines – but prices aren't normally rock-bottom. Still, it's definitely one to check out before you book.

The Lastminute search engine does a grand job

Has Sir Elton advised Lastminute on the colours?

The verdict

Range of flights:	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★☆☆
Extras:	★★★★☆
Overall percentage:	**84%**

✔ Huge range

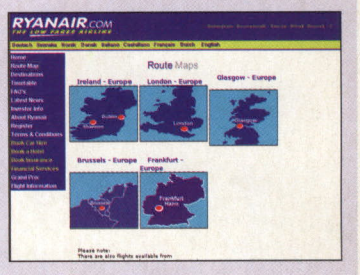
✖ Too much pink!

Ryanair.com

www.ryanair.com

WHILE YOU'RE ON the lookout for flights at knock-down prices, you should certainly check out Ireland's finest, Ryanair. This is one of easyJet's key rivals for the crown of top cut-price airline, and it competes fiercely with some stunning deals on offer. The home page declares a wide range of air fares, which start at less than a tenner (although, after extras such as tax are added on you'll find these fares become slightly higher). On the whole, navigating the site is fairly straightforward, although it does seem a little more cluttered than strictly necessary. The booking process is similarly simple and painless. However, you don't get to see flights leaving the day before and after your chosen departure date, as you do on easyJet. Also, in order to keep prices low and costs to a minimum, Ryanair only flies to a fairly limited number of European destinations.

Don't forget that you'll need to add tax to fares



Destinations are limited, but special deals are rife

The verdict

Range of flights:	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★★
Extras:	★★★☆☆
Overall percentage:	**85%**

✔ Regular special deals

✖ Slightly clunky search facility

You'll find a host of return fares to Europe for around £50 at easyJet – who could ask for more?

easyJet

www.easyjet.co.uk

IN JUST FIVE years, genial Greek geezer Stelios has managed to transform easyJet from a start-up airline into one of the UK's leading carriers. And while many airlines are still struggling to make money, easyJet continues to go against the grain and rake it in. This cut-price, no-frills service has gone from strength to strength in recent years, and that's thanks in no small part to this Web site.

easyJet.co.uk is nice and easy to use, and you can search through all the available flights without too much trouble. But it's when you get to the prices that you realise why the airline is so popular. Return fares to destinations across Europe can often be found for around the 50 quid mark and the site offers a barrow-load of extra features and services into the bargain.

The verdict

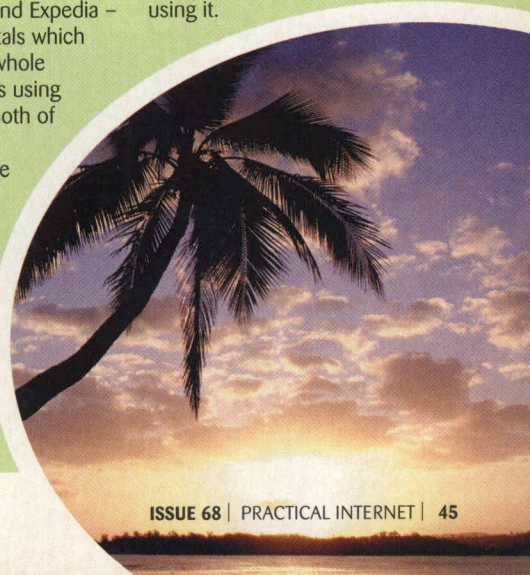
Range of flights:	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★★
Extras:	★★★★☆
Overall percentage:	**89%**

✔ Very, very cheap

✖ Garish colour scheme

The Summary

THERE'S AN ABSOLUTE plane-load of travel sites on the Net, each of them serving a slightly different section of the market. And, as usual, there are some that try to be a little bit too clever. Simplicity is king on the Internet, and if a punter can't find what they want within a couple of clicks, they'll quickly be on their way to another site. This is something the likes of Cheapflights.com and Deckchair would be well-advised to consider. Both sites have plenty of content, but struggling your way through it all is too much of a drag. Better sites are the likes of Bargainholidays.com and Expedia – bright, welcoming portals which lead you through the whole holiday-buying process using simple, clear design. Both of these sites are highly recommended if you're after a package holiday, with bundles of holidays on offer at impressively cheap prices. Lastminute.com is another site you should consider looking at, especially if you're eyes are wandering further than the Med. But if it's flights around Europe you're after, look no further than the no-frills brigade. Sites such as Go and Ryanair make a fine stab at providing travel around the continent for ridiculously low prices, and the Go site in particular is very easy to use. Ahead of them both, however, is easyJet. While Go has the ease-of-use and Ryanair the super-low prices, easyJet benefits from both. The site is a cinch to use, and with returns to Europe often hitting the 50 quid mark, it's hard to have any reservations about using it.



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WORKSHOPS

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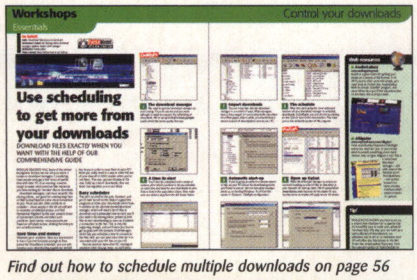
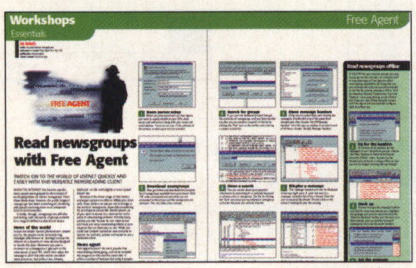


Find out how to schedule multiple downloads on page 56



Discover the exciting world of Usenet with Agent on page 50

Welcome!

SINCE NAPSTERMANIA A couple of years ago, few programs have offered the same wealth of MP3 access. AudioGalaxy blows this out of the water, with more music files available than Napster could ever dream of.

If you've followed our advice in recent months, you should be using file clients and download managers to enrich your downloading experience. Take it a step further with our workshop starting on page 56 – you'll never sit and wait on a download ever again.

The launch of a new GoLive is always a big event in the calendar, and we put this great program through its paces with a four page walkthrough, showing you how to build your very own drop-down menus, without a single line of coding. Enjoy!

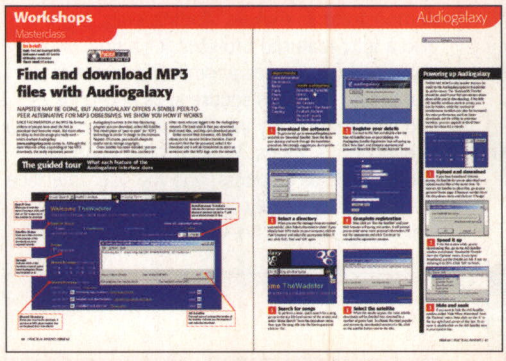
Thomas Watson, Technical Editor

Essentials: page 48-59

msn Messenger
.NET Messenger Service

ANYONE WHO'S RECENTLY upgraded to Windows XP will have noticed that MSN Messenger is now built-in, and goes by the more alluring name of Windows Messenger. Follow our guide to getting the best out of this all-encompassing messaging client

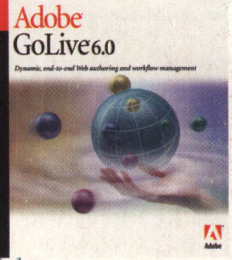
Masterclass: page 60-67



audiogalaxy

FEW FILE-SHARING clients come close to the range of MP3s Napster once offered. Audiogalaxy, however, goes one step further. We show you how to get to grips with the Net's best file-sharing client

Web design: page 68-79



GOLIVE IS ONE of the finest WYSIWYG Web-building packages on the market. The latest version is packed with new features – check out our guide to getting the most from it

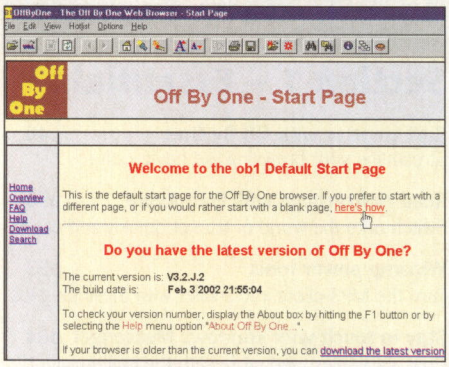
In brief:
Task: Learning to use a browser that's not IE
Software I need: Off By One browser
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: Five minutes to download, 10 minutes to get to grips with the interface

Surf smarter with the Off by One browser

GIVE FLABBY BROWSERS THE BIG HEAVE-HO AND STREAMLINE YOUR SURFING WITH OFF BY ONE

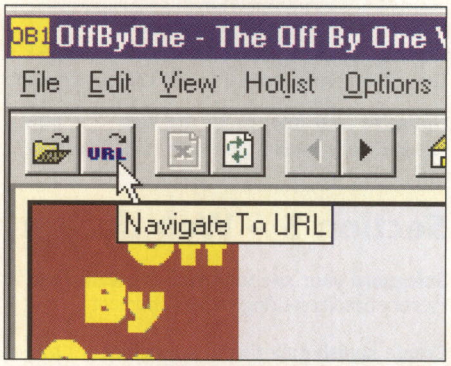
MODERN BROWSERS THROW in everything but the kitchen sink. In fact, as you wait in boredom for the latest IE upgrade to download, you might suspect it's in there somewhere, along with email, newsgroups, chat, and a dozen more things to clog up your hard drive. Think of it this way: how many of your browser's features do you actually use? If you find your PC is starting to creak under the strain of the latest and greatest browser, don't even think about upgrading your hardware: streamline your software.

The Off By One browser (**www.offbyone.com**) puts bigger competitors to shame. It may have been designed just to demonstrate its makers' coding skills, but it's also a fully-featured browser. It's a tiny download, consumes a minimal amount of resources, supports secure sites and cookies, and won't store any incriminating personal data in obscure locations. While it's not quite as configurable as its peers, and the user interface won't win any beauty prizes, it does exactly what it says on the tin, which is why we like it.



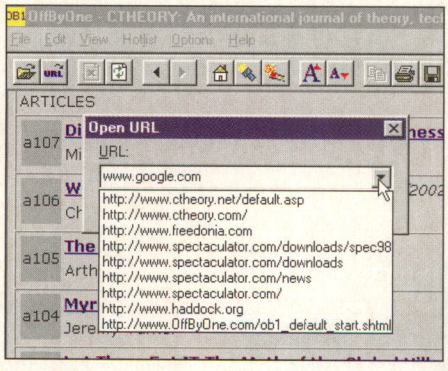
1 Getting started

Once you've installed Off By One, start the program: notice how quickly it loads? You'll see this opening page, which tells you whether you need to upgrade and a button bar that resembles those of the major browsers.



2 Browse Web pages

One thing that's missing is the address bar found in most browsers. This is a bit irritating, but not critical. Just click on the 'URL' button at the top-left of the button bar, or use 'Ctrl+W'. Another alternative is to click on the 'File' button.

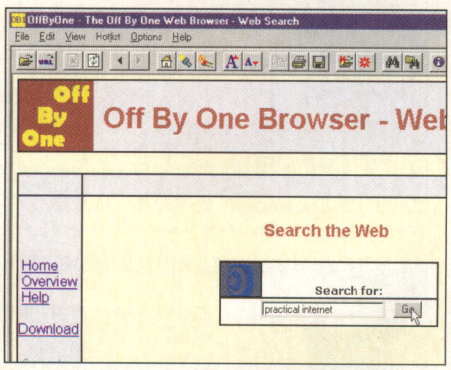


3 Open sesame

Clicking on the 'URL' button opens the 'Open URL' dialog box, where you enter the Web address for a page. You can also call up a list of previously-visited addresses by clicking on the down arrow at the right of the text entry field.

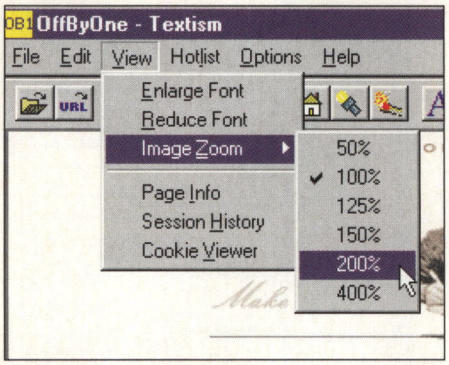
4 Make yourself at home

Open the 'Options' menu and click 'Start & Home Page'. You can select a 'start page', which is the default when you launch the program, and a 'home page' to which you return when you click on the house-shaped icon on the button bar.



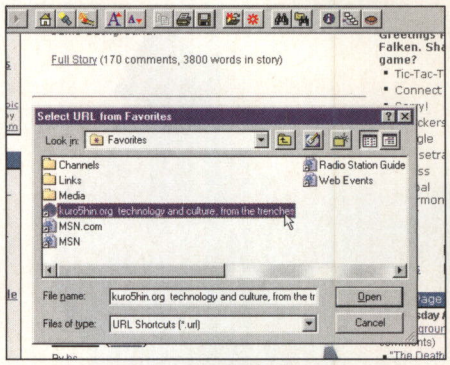
5 Search the Web

Off By One provides its own dedicated search facility. Simply click on the 'Torch' icon on the button bar, enter your search term in the page which appears and you'll be taken to the Overture search engine's results page.



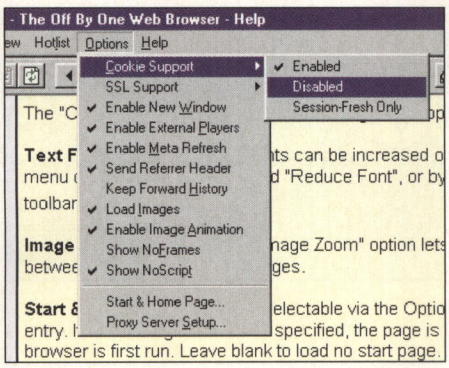
6 Zoom, zoom, zoom

Like more popular browsers, Off By One allows you to adjust the size of text in Web pages. Here, though, you can do this from the button bar with the 'increase' and 'decrease font' icons. The 'View' menu also lets you adjust the size of images.



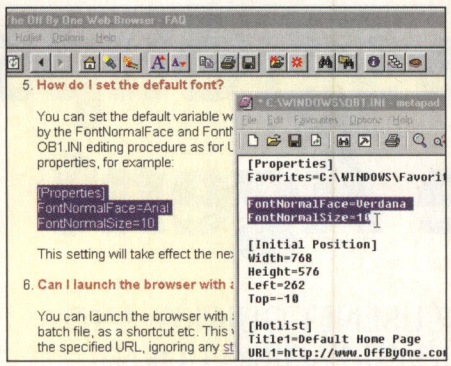
7 Make your (book)marks

Off By One uses the same 'Favorites' format as IE to store Web bookmarks, and you can share them across your browsers. Using a simple file dialog, you can save links to sites and reload them with the two 'Favorites' icons on the button bar.



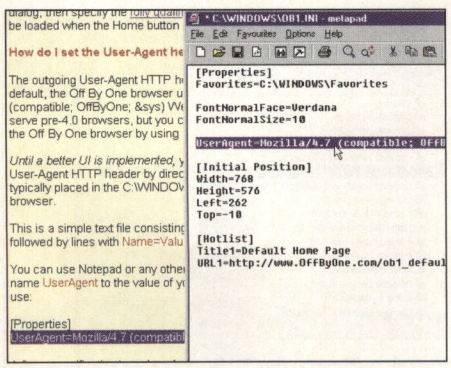
8 Crunch those cookies

Want to stop cookies from being left on your hard drive? Open the 'Options' menu, select 'Cookie Support', and choose 'Disabled'. Even when enabled, Off By One won't clutter your hard drive with temporary files.



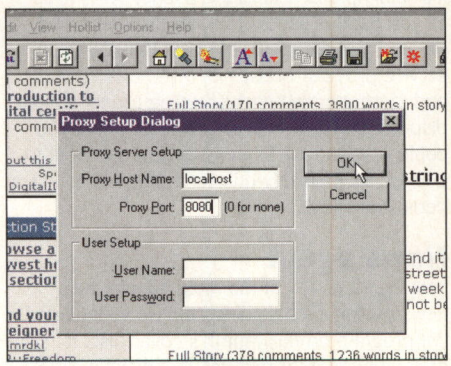
9 Change your fonts

Off By One is built for speed, not beauty: its default choice of fonts aren't too easy on the eye. To change them to something better, open the C:\WINDOWS\OB1.INI file in Notepad, and add the name and size of the base font you'd like.



10 Browsers in disguise

This method also applies if you want to make Off By One pretend it's Netscape or IE in order to fool badly-written browser-detection scripts on sites. Edit OB1.INI and add a 'user-agent' entry: you'll find a list at **www.highermind.org/design/user_agent** .

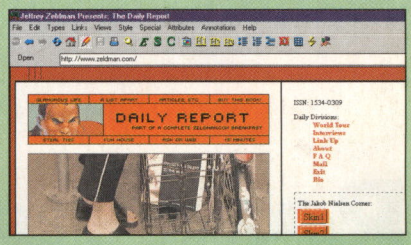


11 Proxy, not poxy

Finally, if you use a proxy server, you'll want to let Off By One know that it's there. Select 'Proxy Server Setup' from the Options menu, and enter the address and port number for the proxy you use, with a username and password if necessary.

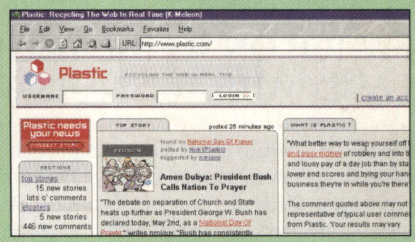
Alternative browsers

THE BIG THREE browsers may dominate the market but there's plenty of alternatives. You'll find particular interest in small, fast browsers, now that even Opera has grown chubby. While it's rather drastic to ditch IE6 for a text-only browser such as Lynx, there's no harm in seeking out older versions of established browsers, or testing unfamiliar programs, especially if you fancy digging out an old PC and using it as a low-end Web box. You'll find a huge list at the Evolt site (**http://browsers.evolt.org**), but here are a few of our favourites:



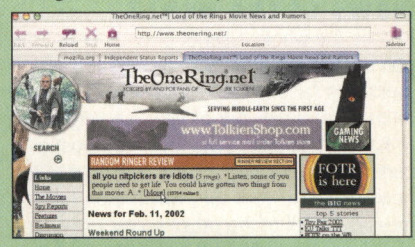
1 Amaya (www.w3.org/Amaya)

Amaya is a 'testbed' client, produced by the W3C, designed to demonstrate how Web standards should look on the major browsers. It's especially useful for detecting bugs in browsers when it comes to rendering pages.



2 K-Meleon (kmeleon.sourceforge.net)

K-Meleon uses the Gecko rendering engine that forms the heart of Netscape 6 and Mozilla. It's slightly more configurable than Off By One, with less need to edit fiddly files, though it hasn't been updated in a while.



3 Chimera (http://chimera.mozdev.org)

Just to keep Mac users happy: Chimera brings together the Mozilla project (**www.mozilla.org**) with the Aqua user interface of OS X. You get a fast, free, standards-compliant browser on the bleeding edge of innovation.

In brief:
Task: Access Usenet newsgroups
Software I need: Free Agent (on the CD)
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: It's up to you

Read newsgroups with Free Agent

SWITCH ON TO THE WORLD OF USENET QUICKLY AND EASILY WITH THIS VERSATILE NEWSREADING CLIENT

WHEN THE INTERNET first became popular, many people were gripped by the concept of exchanging ideas via Usenet newsgroups. Since these heady days, however, the public image of newsgroups has taken something of a battering, with people shunning them as an antiquated form of communication.

In reality, though, newsgroups are still alive and kicking, with thousands of groups available for a range of different subjects and issues.

News of the world

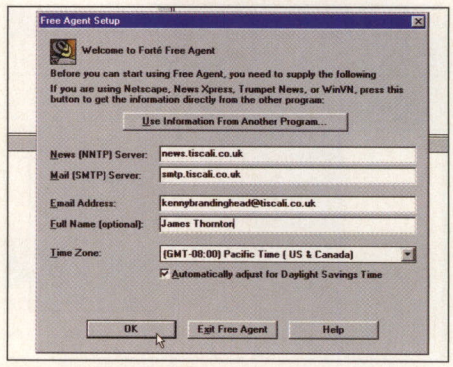
In case the whole 'Usenet phenomenon' passed you by, the system works by transferring messages (also known as 'postings') across the Internet via a network of news servers designed to handle this data. Whenever you post a comment on a newsgroup it gets sent to the news server of your ISP, which then relays the message to all of the other server providers' news servers so that within a few minutes, literally anyone can be reading your ramblings.

At present there are over 50,000 newsgroups in existence and each one caters for a very specific subject area. Remember not to take everything you read on newsgroups at face value, as some people do have a tendency to 'elaborate' on the truth slightly or even spread blatant lies.

Because of the sheer range of information and expert opinion on offer to titillate your brain cells, there really is no excuse not to indulge in the world of newsgroups. Especially considering it's so simple to access the Usenet system, as all you need is access to a news server and a piece of newsreading software. Virtually every service provider houses its own news server and there are many newsreading clients at your disposal that are dead easy to use. While you could use Outlook Express to view and post to Usenet, it's probably quicker and easier to use a dedicated client.

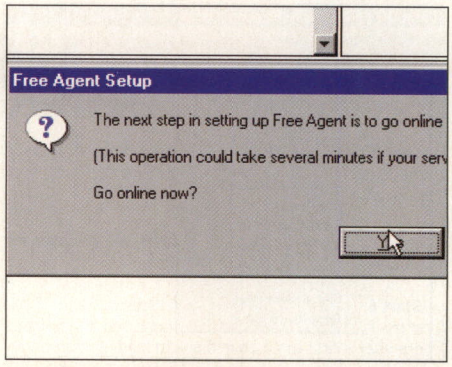
News agent

Free Agent is one of the most popular free newsreading clients going, and we've included the program on this month's cover disc. It offers a number of features that make it simpler for you to organise and manage articles that you're interested in. The software can also be used as an offline newsreader, making it easier for you to access postings if you're using a slow connection or if you want to keep tabs on a large number of newsgroups.



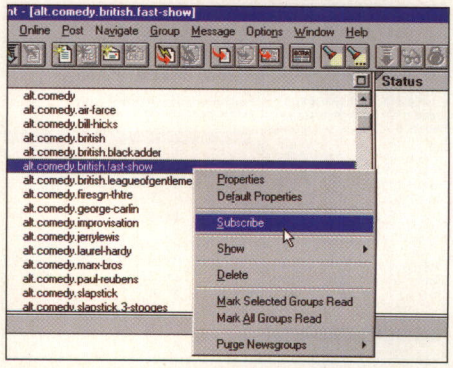
1 News server setup

When you first install and run Free Agent, you need to supply details of your ISP's news server and mail server along with your name and email address. If you're not sure of the address of the servers, contact your service provider.



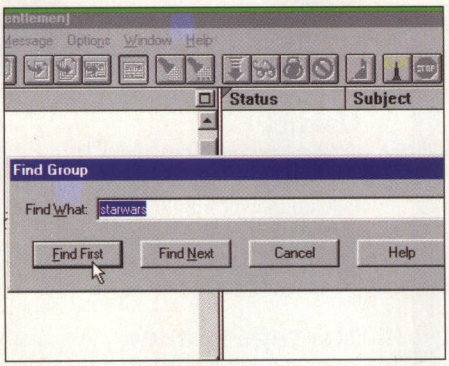
2 Download newsgroups

Now go online and download the complete list of newsgroups available from your server. Click 'OK' when prompted and wait while you are connected to the server and the newsgroups are retrieved. This may take a few minutes.



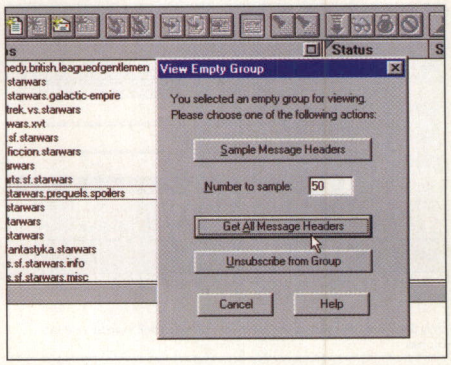
3 Subscribe to groups

Once the list of newsgroups has downloaded, they'll appear in the top-left window pane. Highlight one that interests you, right-click and choose 'Subscribe'. Pick a few, then click the window pane heading to view only subscribed groups.



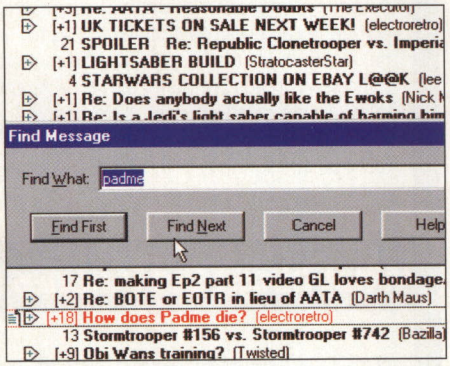
4 Search for groups

If you can't be bothered to trawl through the entire list of newsgroups until you find one that you like, you can perform a search of the list by clicking the 'Find' icon in the toolbar and entering a subject to look for.



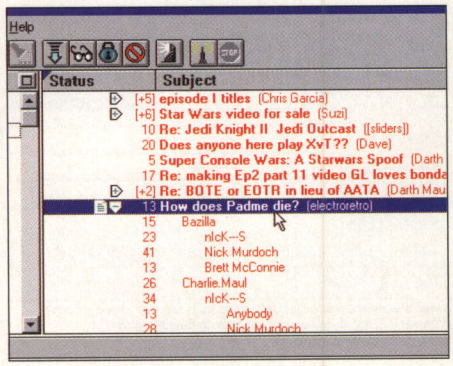
5 Open message headers

Once you've subscribed, start reading the messages. Double-click one of the subscribed newsgroups, then choose 'Get All Message Headers' from the pop-up window. If you don't want all of them, choose 'Sample Message Headers'.



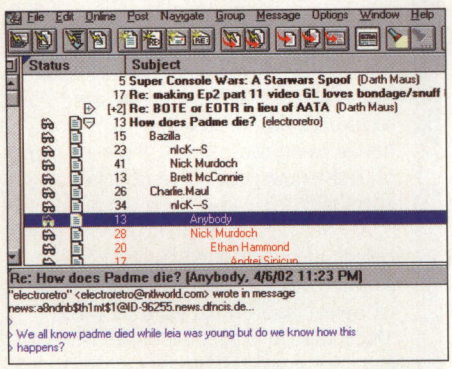
6 Hone a search

You can narrow down your quest for information by searching for a particular keyword or phrase within a newsgroup. Do this by clicking the 'Find' icon once you've selected a newsgroup and enter the topic you wish to mine for.



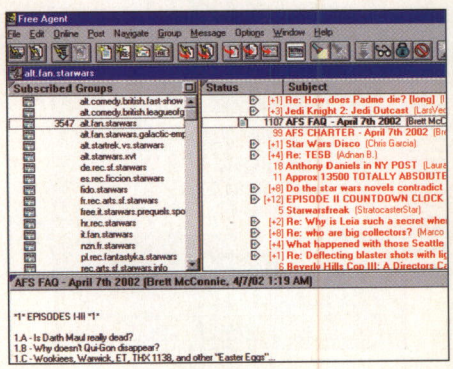
7 Display a message

The message headers will now be displayed in the top-right pane. A 'plus' tab next to a message indicates that it has a thread. Click the icon to expand the thread. Double-click on the subject heading to view the posting.



8 Watch a thread

If you come across an interesting message header, track all the replies that have been posted to it by clicking the 'Watch Thread' icon. Free Agent then automatically fetches the bodies of watched threads when retrieving message headers.

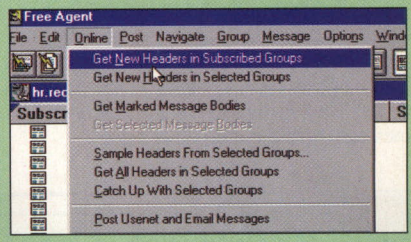


9 Look for FAQs

If you're having trouble finding the answer to a specific question, it's a good idea to perform a search for the 'FAQ' section. Most groups contain FAQs as it gives users easy access to common questions or problems.

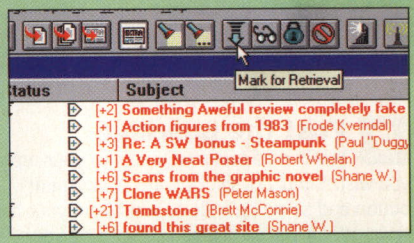
Read newsgroups offline

IF YOU PAY for your Internet access via a pay-as-you-go service provider, it's probably wise to take advantage of Free Agent's offline newsreading capabilities. By doing this you can minimise the time you spend connected to the Net by viewing messages offline. Start by choosing 'General Preferences' from the 'Options' menu and clicking on the 'Online' tab. Press the 'Use Offline Defaults' button and Free Agent will automatically configure itself for offline use.



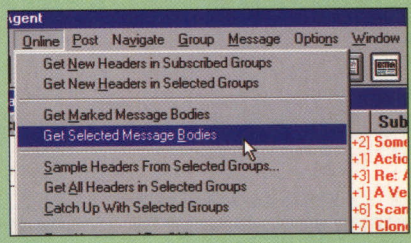
1 Up for the headers

To retrieve all the headers for the messages in your subscribed groups, choose 'Get New Headers in Subscribed Groups' from the 'Online' menu. As soon as the headers are retrieved, it will go offline so that you are no longer incurring dial-up charges.



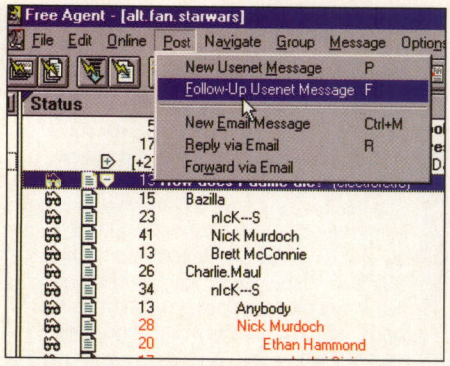
2 Mark up

Browse through the message headers and look for ones that interest you. Highlight the postings you want to read and click the 'Mark for Retrieval' toolbar icon for each one. Alternatively, you can double-click each message to carry out the same function.



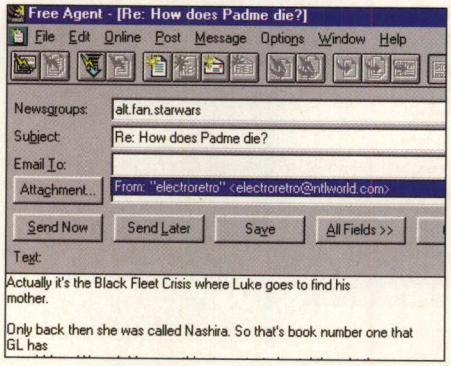
3 Get the message

Once you've marked up the interesting messages, choose 'Get Marked Message Bodies' from the 'Online' menu. Free Agent will now go online and retrieve the full text of all the messages you selected, and go offline as soon as it's finished.



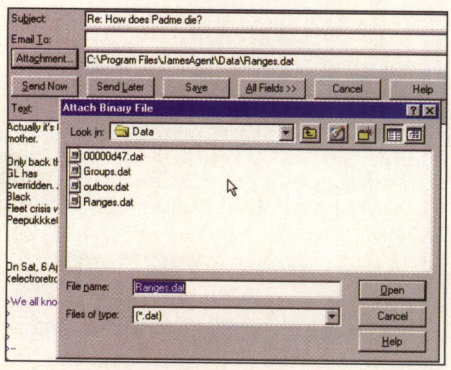
10 Reply to a message

To post a reply to a message, begin by highlighting the original message header to ensure your new posting is formatted properly. Now click on the 'Post' menu and choose 'Follow up Usenet message' from the drop-down list.



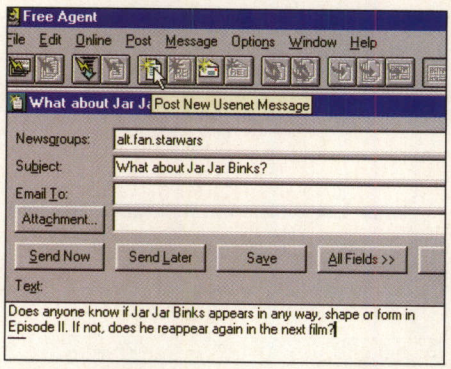
11 Structure your response

When entering your reply, most of the fields will already be filled in for you. However, you might want to send an email to the person who originally raised the message by selecting their address from drop-down 'Email-to' field.



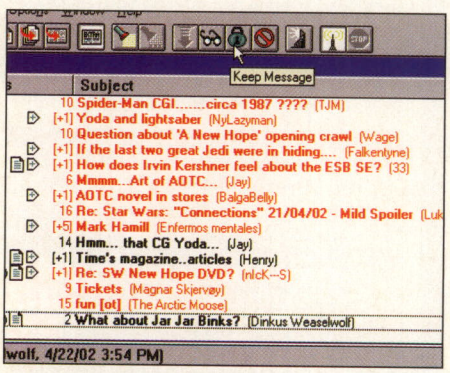
12 Post the message

You can add an attachment to your reply if you wish, simply by clicking the 'Attachment' button and selecting a file to send from your hard drive. When you've finished composing your message, click 'Send Now' to post it.



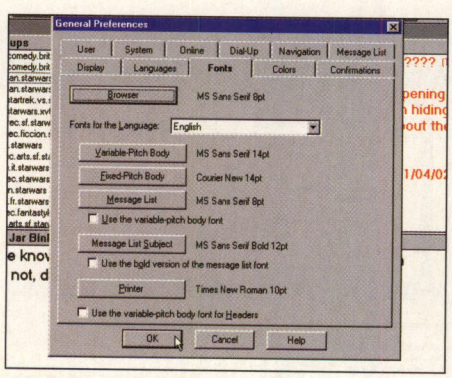
13 Strike up a conversation

You can start your own conversation on Usenet by clicking the 'Post New Usenet Message' icon. This time you need to enter your own subject line before writing the main body of your message in the main window. Hit 'Send Now' to fire it off.



14 Keeping messages

To refresh the newsgroup to view your post, click 'Get New Headers in Selected Groups'. Your post will be displayed at the bottom of the list. If you wish to save a message to prevent it being lost or to keep tabs on it, click the 'Padlock' icon.



15 A different view

You can customise virtually every aspect of Free Agent by selecting 'General Preferences' from the 'Options' menu. Here, you can change the font style and size the message headers and the body text of the postings.

Jargon buster

Usenet

A global network of newsgroups (also known as forums or message boards) that is made up of over 30,000 different topics. Newsgroups are defined by a series of words and full stops, such as **alt.fan.starwars.**

Message header

A subject line that is included in every posting on a newsgroup to specify what the message is about. Once downloaded, the message headers within Free Agent are displayed in the top right-hand pane of the interface.

Thread

A series of replies to an original question posted on a newsgroup, allowing you to follow the train of a conversation from start to finish. Threads are defined in Free Agent by a '+' sign next to the message header which, when clicked, will open up every reply posted to it.

What about the binaries?

WHILE ORIGINALLY INTENDED purely as a forum for written communication, newsgroups have now been jumped on by hungry file swappers as a means for exchanging music, applications, video and images over the Net. This has caused a certain amount of controversy as not all of the files exchanged are entirely legit, and as a result they raise all sorts of privacy and copyright issues.

Files are exchanged as binary so that they can be posted on the newsgroups in raw, ASCII format and then decoded when received. While most newsgroups frown on having binary files posted, there are plenty of binary newsgroups that positively encourage this sort of behaviour.

At one time, the standard encoding was called 'uuencode' and you needed a software utility (uuencode) to prepare a file for transmission and a program called 'Uudecode' to extract the binary file. Now there are several different encoding methods including 'base64' and 'Binhex'. In some instances, one program can be used to encode or decode several file formats. More information on using binary newsgroups is available from sites such as **www.binnews.com** or **www.binnewz.net.**

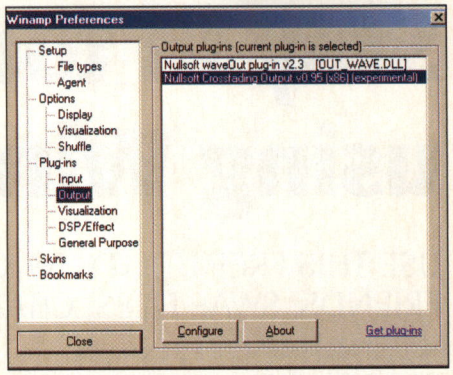
In brief:
Task: Add plug-ins to Winamp
Software I need: Crossfading Output for Winamp, DFX for Winamp, Hotkeys plug-in for Winamp, PureLyrics for Winamp, Speedway
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 30 minutes

Power up Winamp with these plug-ins

TURN ON, PLUG-IN AND FREAK OUT TO THE LATEST PLUG-INS FOR THE POPULAR AUDIO PLAYER

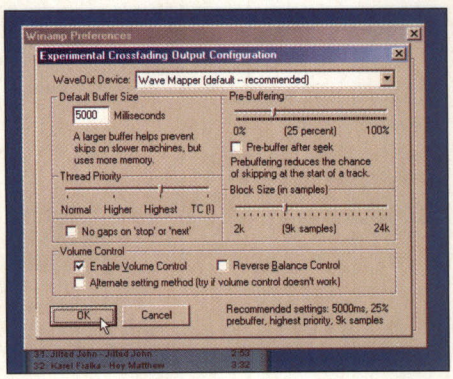
WITH ITS AWESOME range of features, it's no wonder Winamp is the player of choice for many. One of the best things about Winamp is the fact that you can apply any number of cool plug-ins to it in order to increase its features, improve the sound quality or just have a bit of fun while you listen to your music.

Plug-ins are dead easy to install into the Winamp directory and once saved, you can call upon them whenever you choose. We're looking at a few of our favourite plug-ins here, all of which are available from **www.download.com**. These let you perform all sorts of gnarly stunts, including mixing tracks together like a club DJ, bolstering your sound quality with DFX, creating time-saving hotkeys to perform common Winamp functions or checking out the lyrics of songs you're listening to.



1 Configure your plug-ins

Go to **www.download.com**, download the file in question, then save it into the Winamp directory on your hard drive and launch the player. In order to select a plug-in, right-click the 'Graphic equaliser' and choose 'Select Plug-in'.

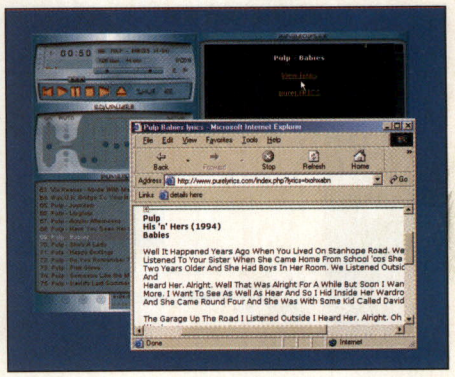


2 Crossfading Output

This plug-in allows you to blend tracks together to produce a seamless mix. By selecting the plug-in from the 'Output' menu and double-clicking it, you can configure settings like the default buffer size and volume control options.

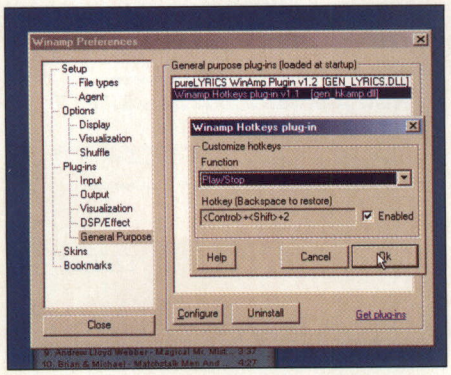
3 DFX for Winamp

The DFX plug-in transforms the player into a hi-fidelity stereo system. You can alter audio properties such as fidelity, ambience and dynamic bass boost using the sliders. Clicking 'Properties' lets you choose from a number of preset 'vibes'.



4 View song lyrics

The PureLyrics plug-in lets you check out a track's lyrics as you listen to it. Every time you play a song, a browser window will appear giving you the option to view its lyrics. There are over 60,000 songs on the database.



5 Using Hotkeys

This plug-in allows you to use shortcut keyboard commands in the player. To view or alter the predefined hotkeys, select the plug-in and click 'Configure'. Select a function from the drop-down menu and type the hotkey you wish to assign to it.

6 Play the game

Once you've installed the Speedway game as a Winamp plug-in, you can play the motor racing game as you listen to your tracks. Right-click the 'Equalizer' window and choose 'Speedway' from the 'Games' option in the drop-down menu.

Tip!

Plug-in baby

If you've caught the plug-in bug, hold tight because there's plenty more where they came from. Visit the Winamp site at **www.winamp.com** and click 'Plug-ins' to access a massive selection of the latest free power ups for the player. These are well-organised into categories and contain everything from games to visualisations, with charts explaining which are the most popular and which ones have just been added. Feel free to plunder as many as you like, but try not to have too many installed at the same time, as things can start to get a little confusing with so many different added extras running at once.

In brief:
Task: Use Messenger to chat and exchange files
Software I need: Windows Messenger (free with XP)
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 15 minutes

Stay in touch with friends using Windows Messenger

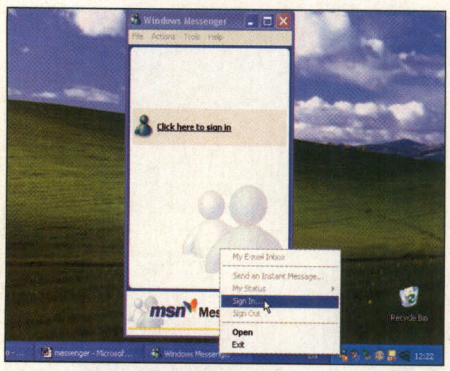
USE THIS FREE UTILITY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR ONLINE FRIENDS, SWAP FILES, CHAT AND MUCH MORE

INSTANT MESSAGING IS a great way to communicate with your online friends, business contacts and work colleagues. It enables you to chat in real time, making it far more entertaining than dull old email and even share files.

Of course, you can also use an instant messenger program for email, but direct connections enable far more to be achieved. For example, using a microphone and your computer's sound facilities, you can speak to your contacts, too. If you and your friend have video cameras, such as Web cams, you can even create a video link.

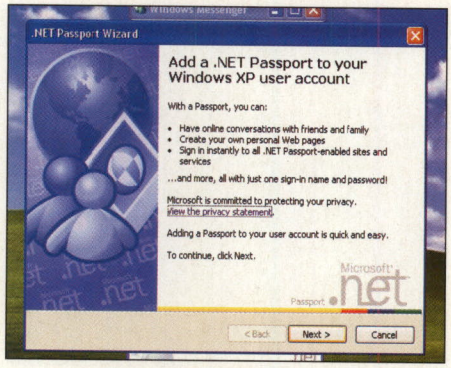
There are many instant messaging utilities, but one of the most ubiquitous is Windows Messenger, mainly due to the fact it is bundled with Windows XP, Office XP and even Office X for for the Mac.

In this tutorial we'll take you on a guided tour of Messenger, starting with signing up for Microsoft's .NET Passport service, adding contacts to your buddy list, initiating text and voice chat sessions and exchanging files. Let's get started...



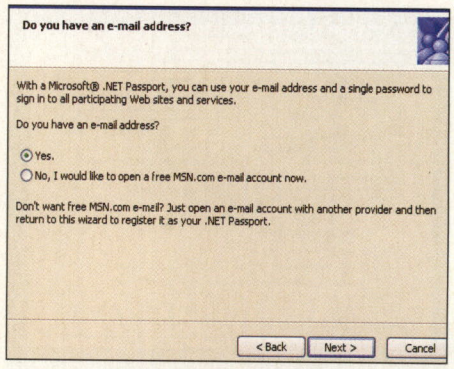
1 Sign in please

If you click on the 'Messenger' icon in the System Tray, a menu is displayed. Most items are greyed out, but Sign In is available. Alternatively you can double-click 'Messenger' to open its window and click the link.



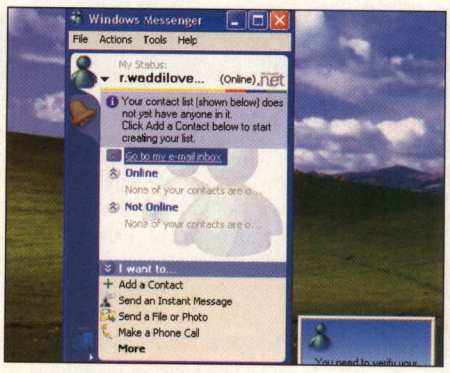
2 Get a Passport

When you click the 'Sign In' link or menu, XP will recognise that you are a new user and you will be prompted to sign up for a .NET Passport. This Wizard appears and the only option available is to click 'Next'.



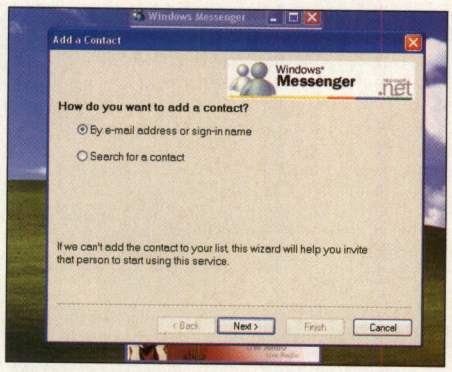
3 Enter your email

In order to have a .NET Passport you must have an email account. A Hotmail account can speed up the configuration of Messenger, but any old email account will do. Select an option and click 'Next'.



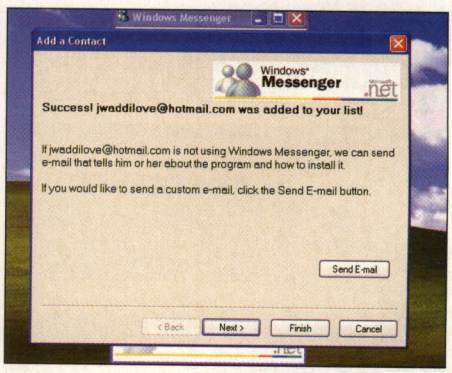
4 Signed in at last

You'll be asked several more questions, such as what country and area you live in, your postcode, what you ate for lunch and other information. Eventually, though, you will be signed in to Messenger.



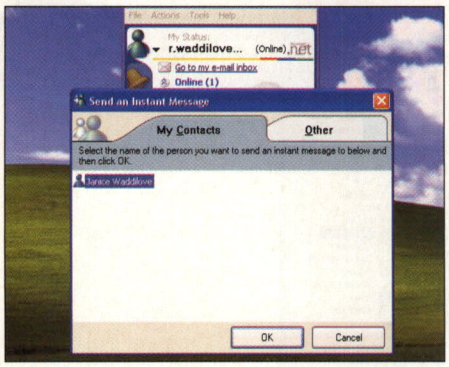
5 Add a friend

You now need to add your friends and work colleagues to Messenger so that it can tell you when they are online. Click 'Add Contact' and choose the top option. Click 'Next' and enter their email address when prompted.



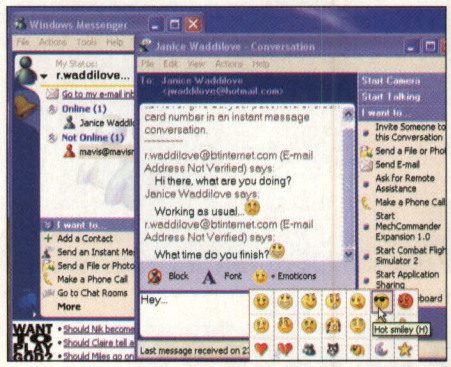
6 Ask them to join

If the person is found, they are added to your contact list. If they are not using Microsoft Messenger, click the 'Send E-mail' button and Messenger will send a note asking them if they want to sign up.



7 Choose a contact

Click the 'Send an Instant Message' link in the lower part of the Messenger window for a list of your contacts to be displayed. Select a person from the list and click the 'OK' button. The conversation window will open.

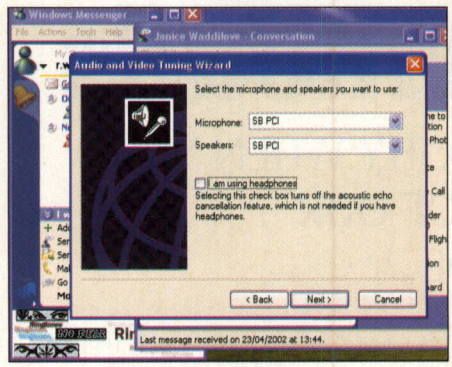


8 Chat to your mate

Just type whatever you want to say into the box in the bottom-left corner and then click the 'Send' button to send the text. You can add an Emoticon by clicking the smiley face and selecting from the palette.

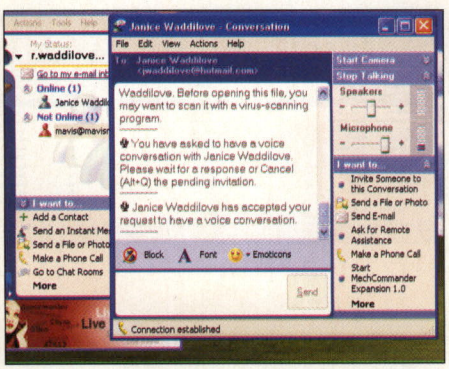
9 Send them a photo

Click the link on the right labelled 'Send a file or photo' or select it from the 'File' menu. A standard file selector appears and you can choose a file to send to this person. Received files are stored in c:\my documents\.



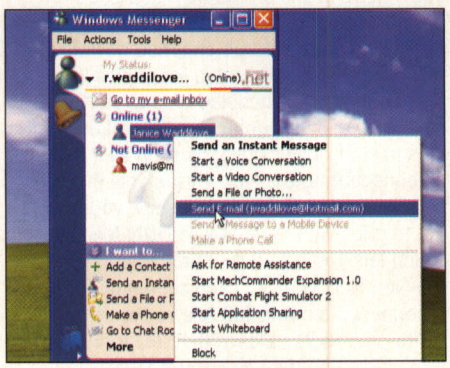
10 Tune in to chat

Click the 'Start Talking' link on the right of the Conversation window and the Audio and Video Tuning Wizard will appear. This only happens the first time you try this, so answer the questions on each screen.



11 Start talking

Once you have set up the microphone and/or video camera, you can start a conversation with the other person. In the top-right corner are the speakers and microphone controls. Click 'Stop Talking' when you have finished.

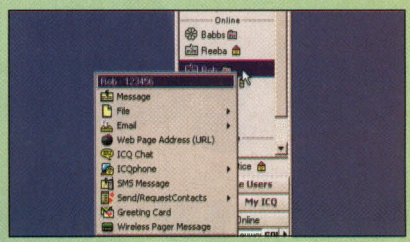


12 The shortcut menu

If you right-click a contact in the list, a menu is displayed showing all the actions you can perform, such as sending an instant message, an email, starting a voice or video conversation, sending a file and so on.

Alternative messengers

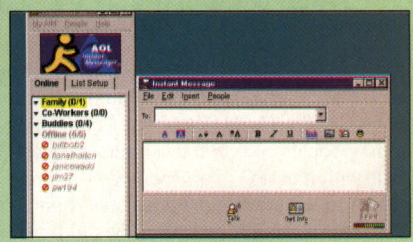
WINDOWS MESSENGER ISN'T the only IM client around – there's also ICQ and AIM (both owned by AOL), and the peerless Yahoo! Instant Messenger. The big problem, though, is that you can only chat to someone who is using the same system (unless you can get hold of a unifying client like Trillian). You therefore need to ask your mates what they are using and then install the same program. Since most people have Windows, Windows Messenger is a safe choice, but here's a bit more on the main alternatives.



ICQ

http://web.icq.com

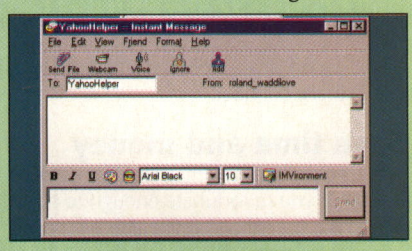
ICQ is one of the oldest of the instant messaging programs and has been around for years. This has enabled it to build a membership of many millions of users. It's free, easy to use and packed with features.



AIM

http://www.aol.co.uk/aim

AOL Instant Messenger is a favourite of many users. It works with all ISPs and you don't need to be an AOL member in order to use it. It looks a bit dull, but has a good range of features and is worth considering.



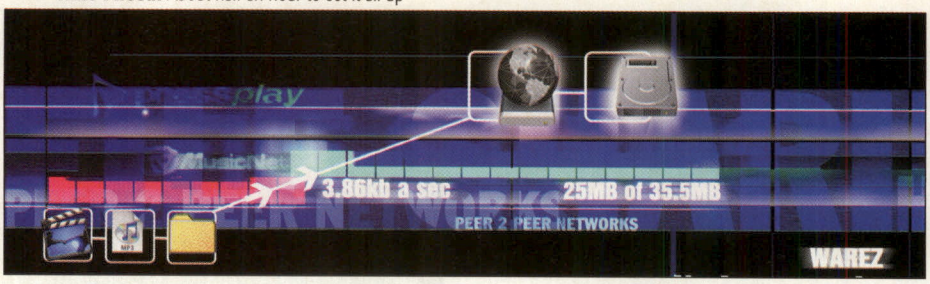
Yahoo! Instant Messenger

http://uk.messenger.yahoo.com

Yahoo!'s offering is free like the rest and offers similar chat, file exchange and other features. Additional features not in the others include stock quotes, the weather and an online calendar. An interesting utility.

In brief:
Task: Download files at your convenience
Software I need: File sharing client, download manager, system restart, DUN manager
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: About half an hour to set it all up

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD



Use scheduling to get more from your downloads

DOWNLOAD FILES EXACTLY WHEN YOU WANT WITH THE HELP OF OUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

REGULAR READERS WILL know of the almost evangelistic fervour we can whip up when it comes to download managers. Considering most people only get a few hours of quality time with their PC of an evening, it seems stupid to waste what precious little moments you have waiting for monster files to download.

Download managers, and more recently, file-sharing clients, are good for creating large lists of files to download at a time more convenient to you. There are also other problems to consider – most people in the UK are still tied to unwieldy unmetered access, and find themselves blighted by the ever present threat of connection cut-offs and other such problems. Even worse, many accounts are based on off-peak access, limiting the time you can actually connect.

Save time and money

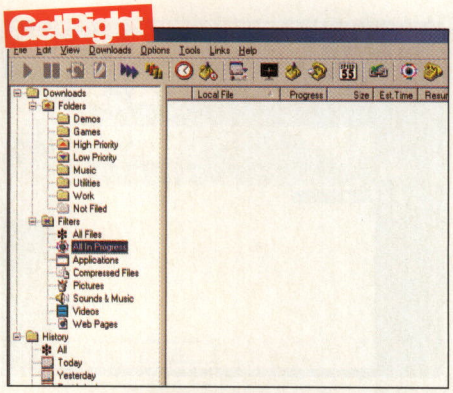
Whatever your problem, there is a way around it. Even if you're fortunate enough to have joined the broadband revolution, you can still improve your downloading experience tenfold by following our complete guide.

Most people have accepted the part a decent download manager can play in their life, but still allow themselves to be dictated to completely by their ISP. What use is a huge list of files to download, if you have to stop browsing for a few hours in order to save them to your PC? What you really need is a way to make full use of your freecall or ADSL access when you're not there. This way, you can browse to the max, build up a list of downloads, then set them running when you're not there.

Busy schedules

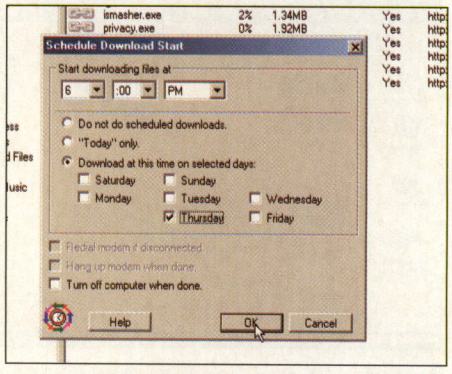
This ain't no stroll in the park, however, and you'll need to call on the help of a good few programs to show your downloads who's boss. In addition to the aforementioned download manager, which will need a list of files to download and a scheduled time to start, you'll also need a file sharing client, jacked up with files to start downloading as soon as it detects a connection to the Net. This is only the beginning, though, and we'll show you how to get to grips with the fantastic DUN Manager, which lets you schedule a time to connect to the Net. Hell, you can even set a time for it to reconnect after your ISP has cut you off.

No-one wants to leave their PC running all weekend when they go away, so we'll show you how to schedule a shutdown time when, hopefully, all of your downloads have completed. This way, you can get your hands on as many files as you want, and save the worry of your expensive new P4 processor exploding in the process.



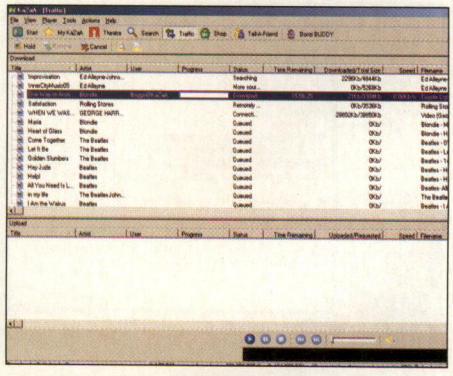
1 The download manager

We need to get our download manager up and running. You can use any one you want, although it needs to support the scheduling of downloads. We're using GetRight (**www.getright.com**), which has some quality features.



4 A time to start

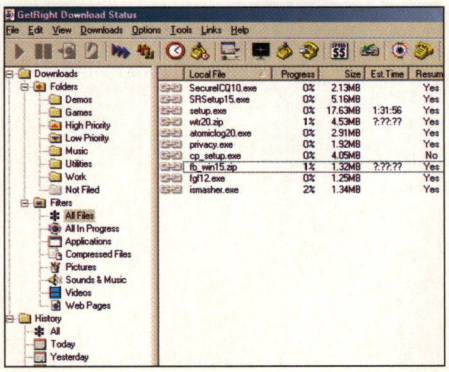
You'll now be presented with a series of options, all of which combine to let you schedule an exact time and date for your downloads to start. Enter a time in the way shown above, then make sure you select a day from the tick boxes below.



7 Build up the list

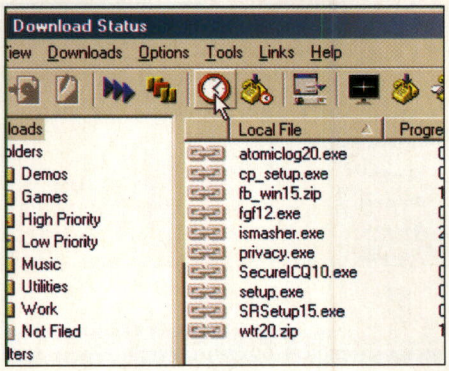
Using the time-honoured tradition started in Napster, search for files using the 'Search' tool, then double-click on any you'd like to download. After a short time, you should have a decent list of files queued in KaZaA.

Control your downloads



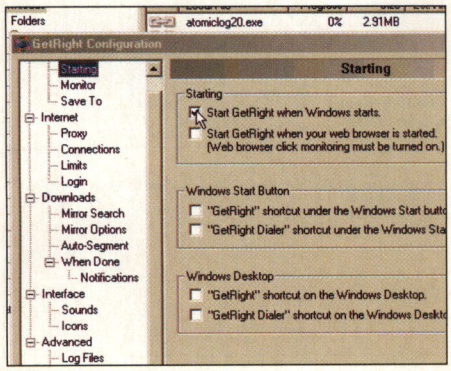
2 Import downloads

You can bring files into the download manager in a number of ways. Most managers have a 'drop target' for you to drop links into direct from Web pages. After a while, you should have a decent amount of downloads to save to your PC.



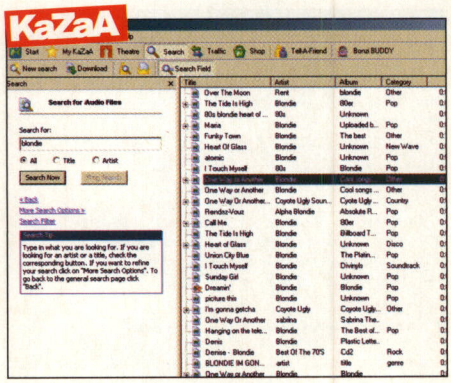
3 The schedule

Now let's start using the more advanced features of your download manager to schedule downloads. In GetRight, you can do this by clicking on the 'Clock' icon in the main toolbar. This takes you to the schedule section of the program.



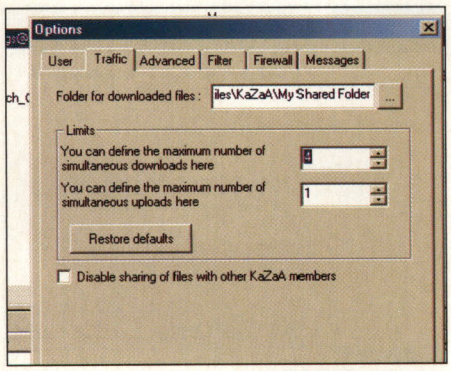
5 Automatic start-up

If you're going to perform a remote reboot to tidy up your PC before the downloading starts, you'll have to ensure that the download manager starts up on booting Windows. You'll find this option in 'Options', 'GetRight configuration'.



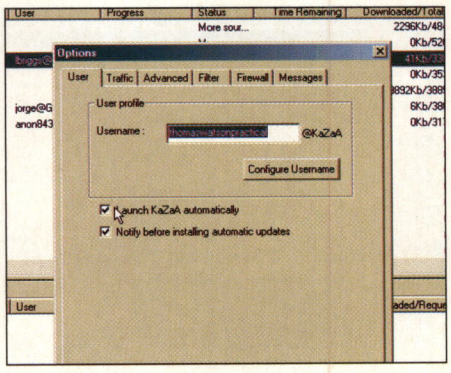
6 Open up KaZaA

Now the download manager is sorted, we can start building up a list of files to download in your friendly file sharing client. We're using KaZaA (**www.kazaa.com**) because it's the easiest to use, but the same principles will apply to any file sharer.



8 Simultaneous downloads

After setting up a hefty queue of files, it's time to configure the number of downloads your file sharer will attempt at any one time. If you're using ADSL, set this to five or so. Users on a 56Kb modem should stick to one or two.



9 Auto start

Yet again, we'll have to ensure that KaZaA starts up whenever Windows boots. Go to 'Tools', 'Options', and tick the 'Launch KaZaA automatically' box. You can always turn this option off if you're not a fan of slow PC start-ups.

Web resources

AudioGalaxy

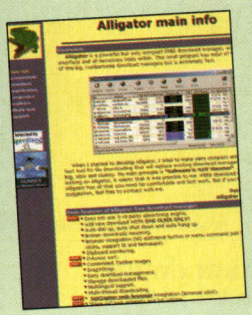
www.audiogalaxy.com

KaZaA is a great client for getting your hands on a variety of file formats. If it's MP3s you're after, pure and simple, you need look no further than AudioGalaxy. With its minute 'Satellite' program, and more MP3s than you'll find anywhere else on the Web, this is all you need.

Alligator

www.nearsoftware.com/alligator

If the multi-faceted features of GetRight prove too much for you, or you simply want to sample something much more refined, why not give Alligator a try? This is a more basic download manager – still with most of the features you'd find elsewhere – and comes housed in a more intuitive interface which makes it easier to operate.

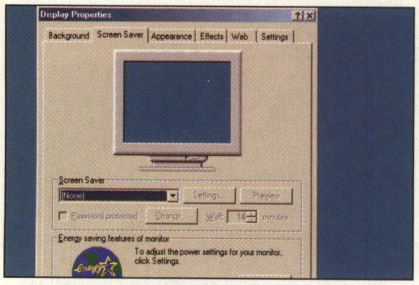


Tip!

WHILE WE'VE SHOWN you how to set up a reboot then shutdown for a specific day, it's incredibly easy to make your schedule run every day. This way, you can build up a vast collection of downloads to run whenever you're not in, or whenever your ISP will allow you free access to the Net. To do this, simply select 'Every day' from the calendar section of TaskScheduler to make the shut down facility come on every day of the week. Make sure you alter your download manager accordingly, and don't forget to pile tons of downloads in there, to make your hard work worthwhile.

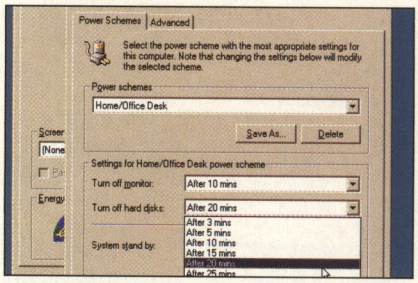
Power-saving tips

LEAVING YOUR PC on all day is hardly the ideal solution to your downloading problems. In particular, anyone with a P4 processor will find themselves worrying about their PC melting away during marathon 12-hour stints. One way around this is to set your PC to turn its hard drives off after a period of inactivity. It's not perfect, but it might save your motherboard from an early grave.



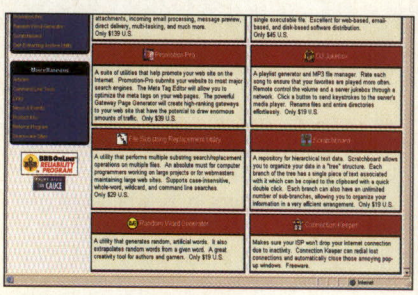
1 Power options

You can access the power options on your PC. Right-click on the desktop and select 'Properties'. Click the 'Screen saver' tab at the top, then on the 'Settings' button. Alternatively, access power options from the Control Panel.



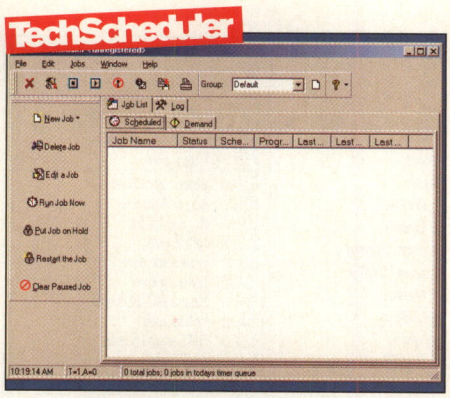
2 Shut them down

Now set the 'Turn off hard drives' option to a time period of your choosing. Although going to system standby would be more protective, it also prevents your schedules from working.



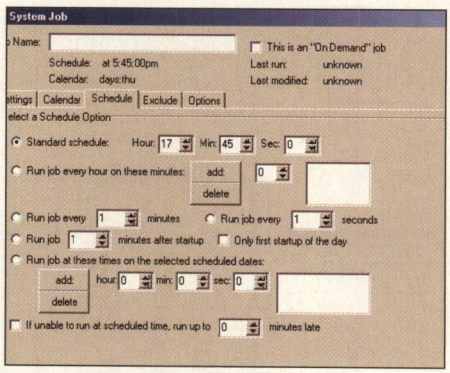
3 A mouse mover

With the hard drives shutting down after inactivity, we want something to prevent this after the reboot. Use a mouse moving connection keeper like 'Connection Keeper' from **www.gammadayne.com**.



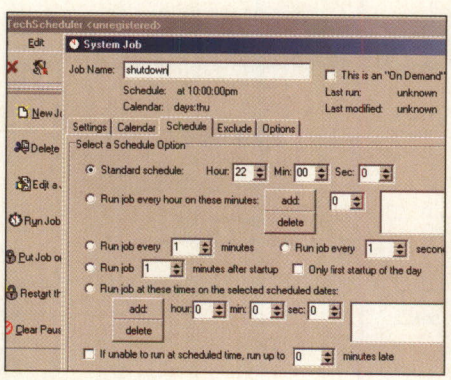
10 Using a rebooter

Unfortunately, it's not possible to make your PC turn itself on at a pre-specified time, so you'll have to leave your machine on. There are ways to shut it down afterwards, though. We're using TechScheduler (on the CD) for this.



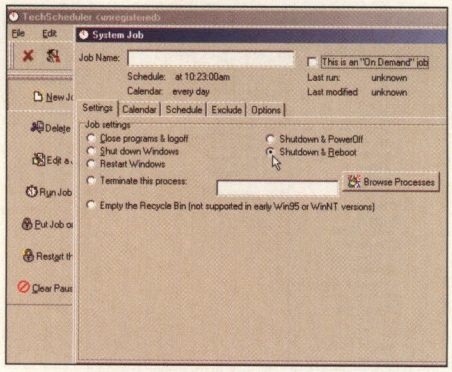
12 Time to reboot

Set the day this task should be run by selecting the 'Calendar' tab. Now click the 'Schedule' tab and set a time. Set the reboot about 15 minutes before the download manager schedule starts, to give your PC time to start up properly again.



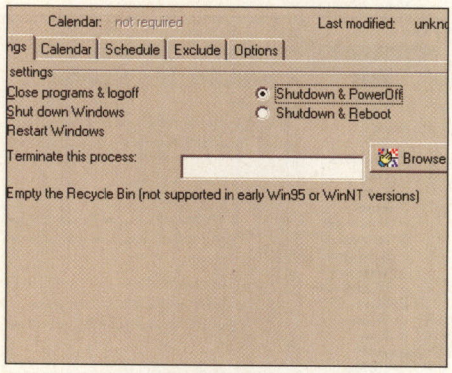
14 Shut it down

As with the reboot before, you have to set a day and time for the PC to shut down. We're opting for a full system shut down four hours after the downloading starts. Make sure you give your job a name, or TaskScheduler won't accept it.



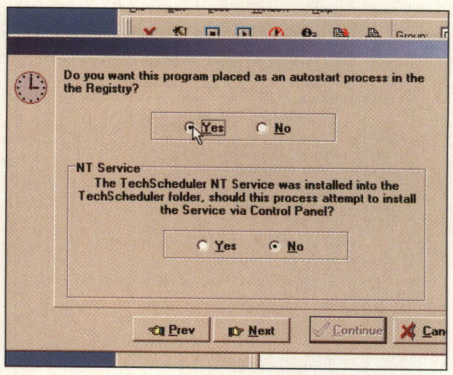
11 The first task

Because we're leaving our PC running for hours before the schedule kicks in, we want the machine to reboot before the action starts. Click 'New job', then 'System task' from the drop down menu. Now click on 'Shutdown and reboot'.



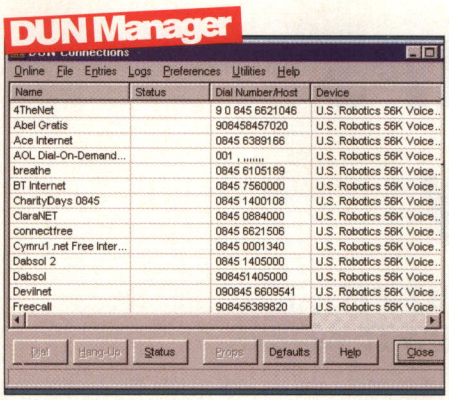
13 Another task

It's bad enough your PC is left idle for hours before any downloading starts, so you really don't need it left on for ages after it all stops. To solve this, schedule a shutdown process – click on 'New job', 'System task', then 'Shutdown and PowerOff'.



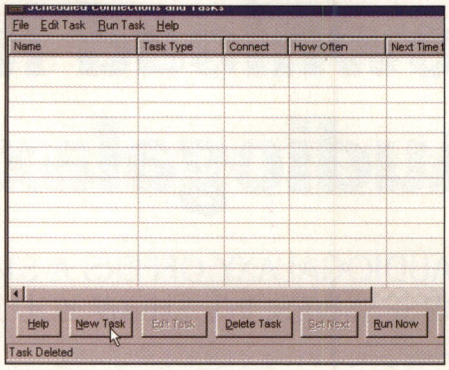
15 Autostart

Getting TaskScheduler to run on startup is a long-winded process. Go to 'Window', then 'Rerun setup wizard'. After pressing 'Next' a few times, you'll see the above screen. Select the 'Yes' radio button to ensure TaskScheduler starts automatically.



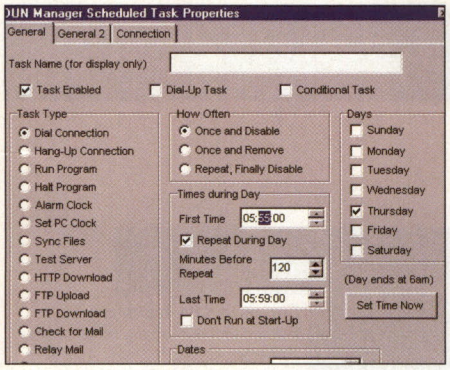
16 Start up DUN manager

Now everything's set up, all that's left to do is configure your PC to connect to the Internet automatically. Again, we'll have to call upon the services of a third party program – this time it's the excellent DUN Manager (**www.magsys.co.uk**).



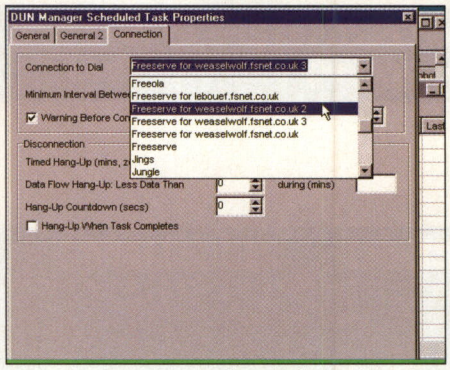
17 The scheduler

To access the scheduler in DUN Manager, go to 'Utilities' then choose 'Scheduler'. This brings up the blank schedule, where you can add connection tasks. To add a task to the scheduler, click the 'New task' button.



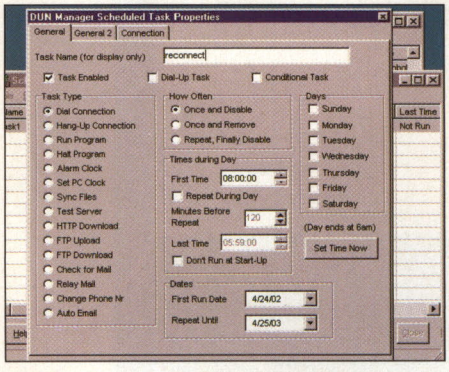
18 Set the schedule

In the above screen, make sure that you set the correct day on the right. Once you've done this, choose a time for the connection to kick off – ensure it's after the reboot, but before your download manager kicks in.



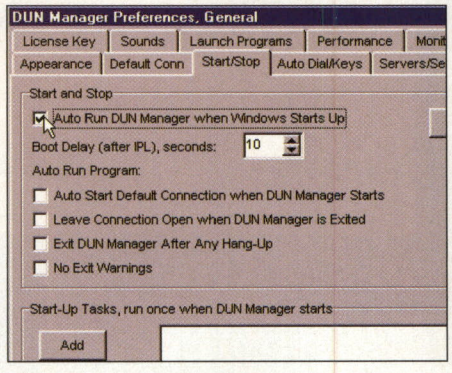
19 Choose a connection

Having set the schedule, all you need to do now is choose which connection to start. Click on the 'Connection' tab at the top, then select a connection from the drop down list. Having done this, your first connection schedule is complete.



20 Combat cut-offs

Many ISPs like to kick you off their services after set times, but there's an easy way around this with DUN Manager. Simply create another task, then set it to start five minutes after your cut-off period will have seen your connection ended.



21 Auto-start

You have to make sure that DUN Manager starts automatically when Windows is booted. Go to 'Preferences', then 'General Preferences'. Click the 'Start/stop' tab, then tick the 'Autorun DUN Manager' box.

Jargon buster

Drop target

This is a method used by download managers to make the importing of files into the interface easier. Instead of having to manually type URLs and links into the program, this system gives you a small icon which sits over the top of your browser. All you need to do is drag the link you wish to download into this 'Drop' icon, and it'll be imported into the download manager.

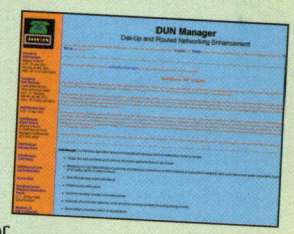
DUN – Dial-Up Networking

This is the term given to connection methods by every version of Windows until XP (where it is truncated to 'networking'). Dial-Up Networking is simply where all of your connections are housed, and also contains many of the functions you need to configure your Internet dial-up accounts to work better.

Web resources

DUN Manager

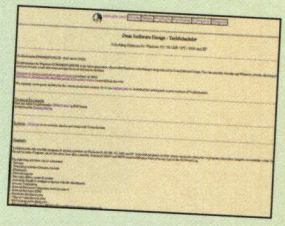
www.magsys.co.uk



The garish cyan blue page background might not inspire the utmost confidence in you, but this is the only place you need to go for information on the remarkably impressive DUN Manager. From supported Operating Systems to detailed FAQs, the Magenta Systems has a comprehensive catalogue of information for you to peruse.

TechScheduler

www.winutils.com



TechScheduler is a complex program and might take a bit of getting used to. Check out the developer's site to garner more information on this scheduling program, including an excessively official-sounding 'white paper' on the subject matter in hand.

In brief:
Task: Find and download MP3s
Software I need: AG Satellite
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 60 minutes

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Find and download MP3 files with Audiogalaxy

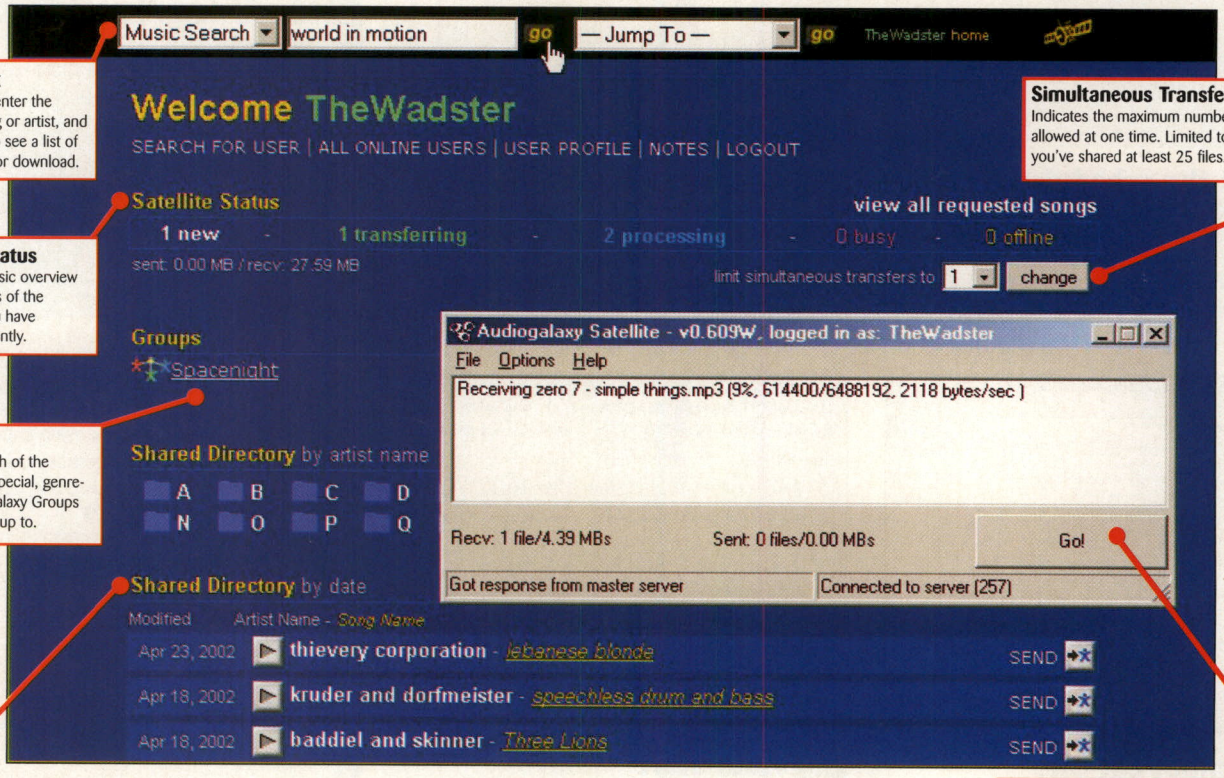
NAPSTER MAY BE GONE, BUT AUDIOGALAXY OFFERS A STABLE PEER-TO-PEER ALTERNATIVE FOR MP3 OBSESSIVES. WE SHOW YOU HOW IT WORKS

SINCE THE INVENTION of the MP3 file format, millions of people have used the Net to download their favourite music. But it can often be tricky to find the songs you really want – which is where Audiogalaxy (**www.audiogalaxy.com**) comes in. Although the main Web site offers a sprinkling of free MP3 downloads, the really impressive part of Audiogalaxy's service is the free file-sharing program you can download, called AG Satellite. This clever piece of 'peer-to-peer' (or 'P2P') technology is similar in design to the infamous Napster. Of course, you should always be careful not to infringe copyright.

Once Satellite has been installed, you can access thousands of MP3 files, courtesy of other users who are logged into the Audiogalaxy network. The basic deal is that you download their music files, and they can download yours.

Unlike normal Web browsers, AG Satellite allows you to resume broken transfers. Even if you can't find the file you want, select it for download and it will be transferred as soon as someone with that MP3 logs onto the network.

The guided tour — What each feature of the Audiogalaxy interface does



Search box
Allows you to enter the name of a song or artist, and click on 'Go' to see a list of files available for download.

Satellite Status
Gives you a basic overview of the progress of the downloads you have requested recently.

Groups
Indicates which of the hundreds of special, genre-based Audiogalaxy Groups you're signed up to.

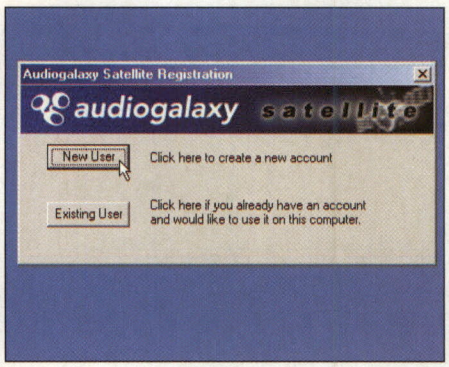
Shared Directory
Shows your most recent downloads. If you have an MP3 player installed, files can be played direct from this list.

Simultaneous Transfers
Indicates the maximum number of transfers allowed at one time. Limited to '1' until you've shared at least 25 files.

AG Satellite
The small piece of software that handles all the transfers. It shows you the progress of each individual download.

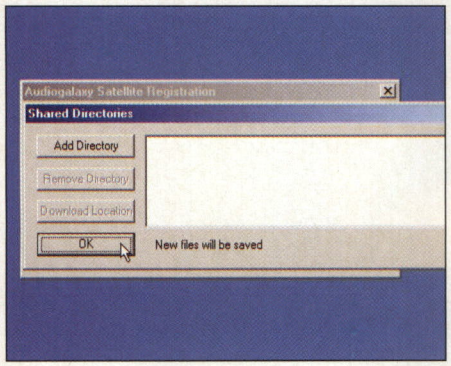
1 Download the software

To get started, go to **www.audiogalaxy.com** and click on 'Download Satellite'. Save the file to your desktop and work through the installation procedure. We strongly suggest you don't put the software in your Start Up folder.



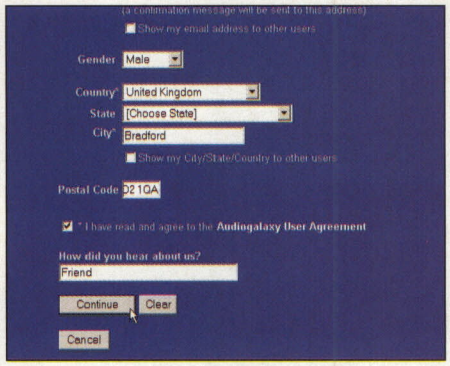
2 Register your details

Connect to the Net and double-click the blue AG Satellite icon on your desktop. An 'Audiogalaxy Satellite Registration' box will spring up. Click 'New User', and choose a username and password. Now click the 'Create Account' button.



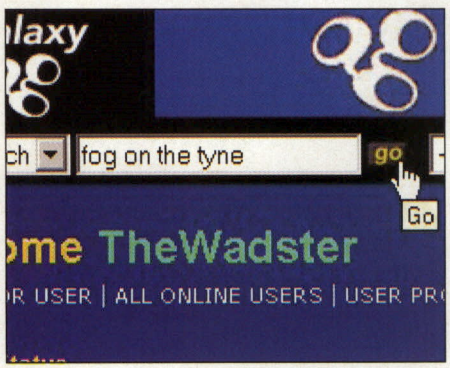
3 Select a directory

When you see the message 'Account created successfully', click 'Select directories to share'. If you already have MP3 tracks on your computer, click on 'Add Directory' and select the appropriate folder. If not, click 'OK', 'Yes' and 'OK' again.



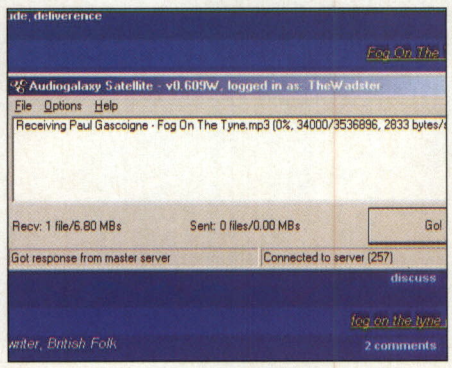
4 Complete registration

Now click on 'Run the Satellite!' and your Web browser will spring into action. It will prompt you to enter some more personal information. Fill out the necessaries and click 'Continue' to complete the registration process.



5 Search for songs

To perform a basic, quick search for a song, go up to the top left-hand corner of the screen and select 'Music Search' from the drop-down menu. Now type the song title into the blank space and click on 'Go'.

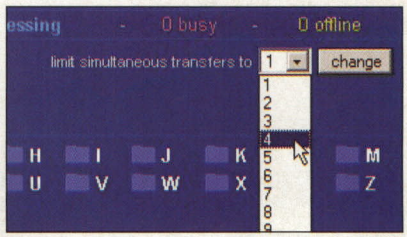


6 Select the satellite

When the results appear, the most reliable downloads will be detailed first, denoted by a number of green bars. To choose the most popular and commonly downloaded version of a file, click on the satellite button next to the title.

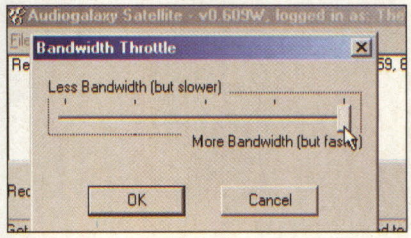
Powering up Audiogalaxy

THERE ARE SOME crafty tweaks that can be made to the Audiogalaxy system to optimise its performance. The 'Bandwidth Throttle' should be used if your Net connection slows down while you're downloading. If the little AG Satellite windows starts to annoy you, it can be hidden, while the number of simultaneous transfers can also be increased. For extra performance, such as faster downloads and the ability to prioritise transfers, you can upgrade to Gold User status for about £2 a month.



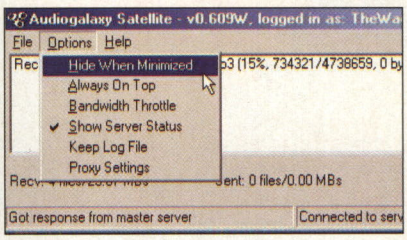
1 Upload and download

If you have broadband Internet access, it's feasible for you to download and upload several files at the same time. To instruct AG Satellite to allow this, go to your personal home page. Choose a number from the drop-down menu and click on 'Change'.



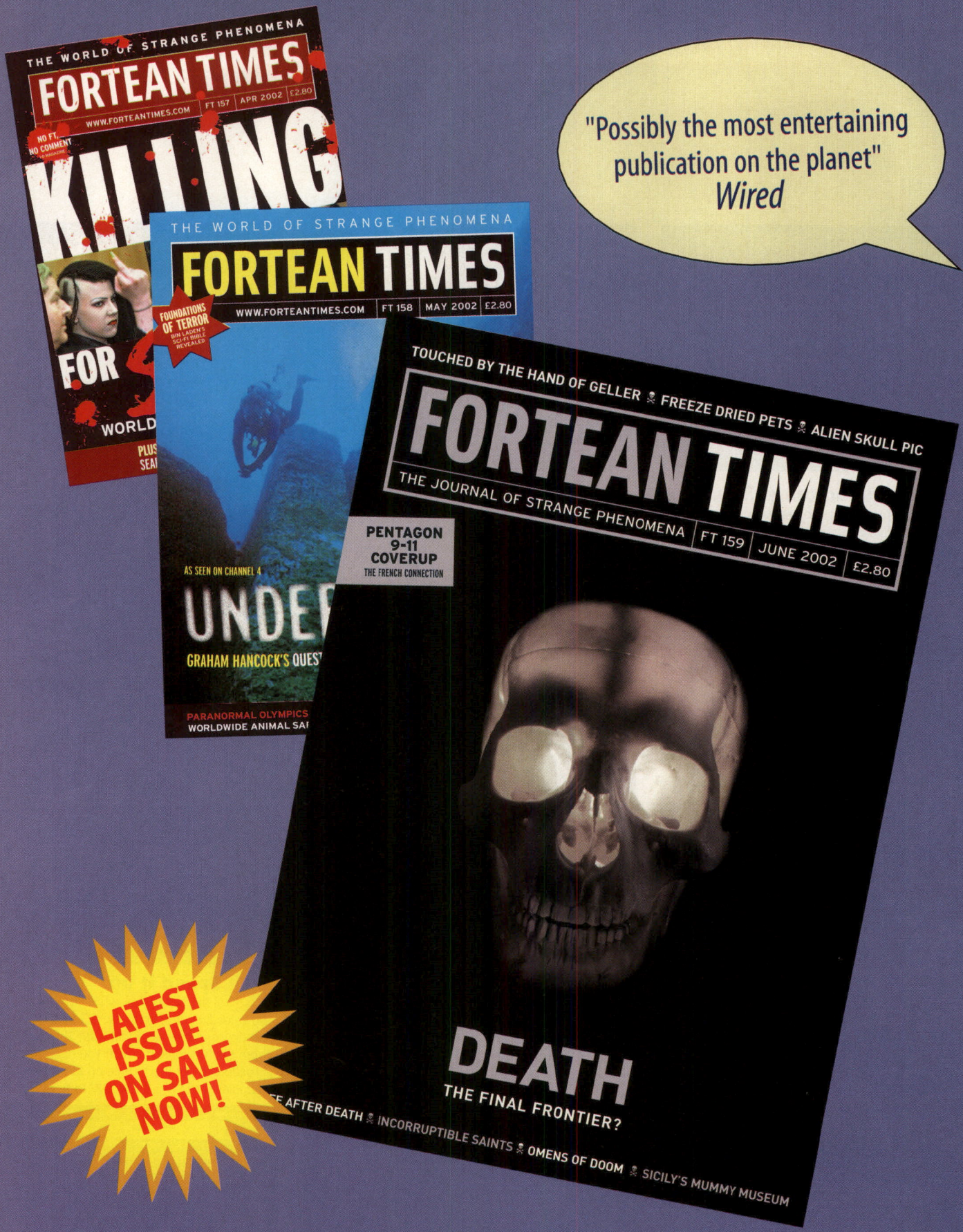
2 Speed it up

If the Net is slow while you're downloading files, go to the AG Satellite window and choose 'Bandwidth Throttle' from the 'Options' menu. If you have broadband, put the throttle on full. If not, try reducing it to 25%. Click 'OK' to finish.



3 Hide and seek

If you want to hide the AG Satellite window, select 'Hide When Minimized' from the 'Options' menu. Now click on the 'X' in the top right-hand corner of the box. To re-open it, double-click on the AG Satellite icon in your system tray.



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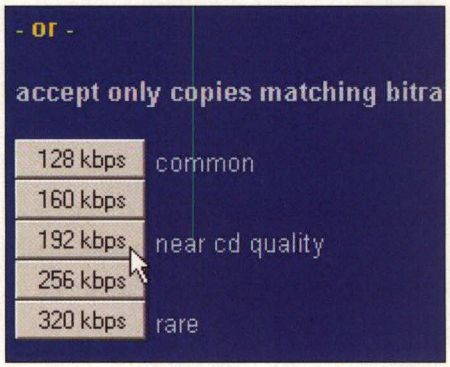
7 Make the switch

If you switch from your Web browser to the small AG Satellite window, you can watch the file download. This window will keep you informed about the speed of the transfer and how much data is still left to copy.

8 Play the song

To play your file, go to the top right-hand corner of the screen and click 'Your Username home'. Click the grey 'Play' button next to the song to open your MP3 player. If you don't have an MP3 player, get one from **www.winamp.com**.

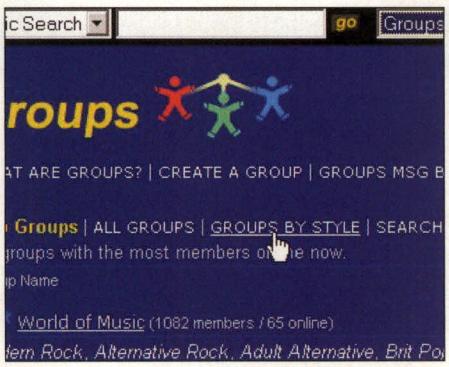


9 Look for quality

If you're looking for a file of high sound quality, perform a search as before, but click the title of the song. You will see five buttons representing different levels of sound reproduction. Click on the appropriate one to start the download.

10 Go for genre

If you're looking for a particular genre, go to the 'Jump To' menu and select 'All Genres'. Within each genre you will find sub-genres. Click one that interests you, and then click on an artist's name to see tracks available for download.



11 Find a Group

If you're into a certain type of music, you may like to join a special Audiogalaxy Group, which allows you to send files to others and have private chats. Select 'Groups' from the drop-down 'Jump To' menu and click on 'Groups by style'.

12 Apply to join

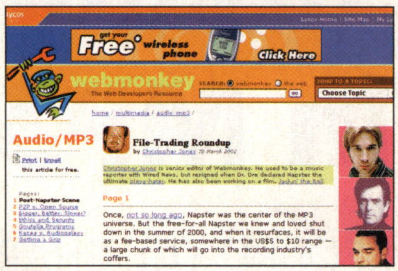
Select a sub-genre from the list, and click the name of the Group to join. Under the Join Group heading, click on the word 'here'. Now click on the grey 'Apply to Join' button. You become a member once you've been approved by the moderator.

Web resources

Webmonkey

http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/00/35/index2a.html

Excellent, in-depth article about the history, ethics and future of Internet file sharing. Written in an irreverent, easy-to-read style, it also looks at the technology behind systems like Audiogalaxy.



About.com

http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/peertopeer

About.com is a fountain of knowledge on most subjects, and file sharing is no exception. This special part of the Computer Networking section contains links to articles about all aspects of P2P.

Jargon buster

P2P

This stands for 'peer-to-peer'. P2P software allows two normal computers to exchange files over the Internet, without the need for a central server.

MP3

A popular file format that allows CD quality sound to be compressed to a great extent – but without noticeably damaging the sound quality when it's played back.

AG Satellite

The small piece of software provided by Audiogalaxy, which allows you to swap MP3 music files with other users.

Broadband

Super-fast Internet access. ADSL is a common example, delivered via a telephone line. Broadband can also be accessed via cable or satellite.

In brief:
Task: Save streaming audio to MP3
Software I need: StreamRipper32 (on the CD), plus Winamp (optional)
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: It's up to you

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

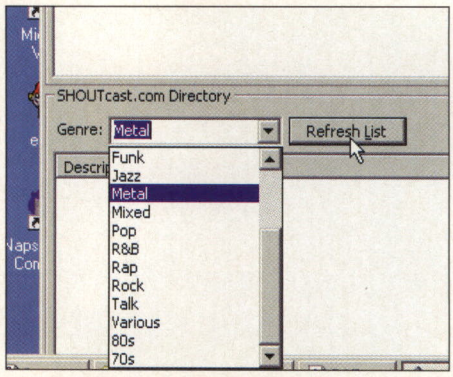
How to record streaming audio in MP3 format

RECORD THE CHARTS FROM THE NET, JUST LIKE YOU ONCE DID WITH RADIO 1...

IN DAYS GONE by, one of the best ways to get hold of a copy of your favourite track was to 'borrow' it by tape recording it from the radio. Of course, technology has moved on a bit since then and following the rise of digital music, cassettes have been well and truly consigned to the scrapheap.

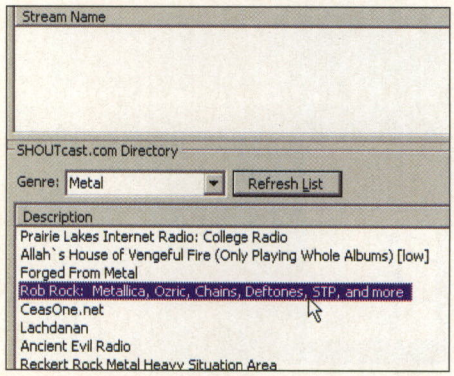
Thanks to the fact that there are so many Internet radio stations spinning a diverse range of tunes, it's possible to add to your eclectic collection of MP3s by ripping songs that are streamed over the Net on one of these stations. One of the best tools for this job is StreamRipper, which is on the CD. StreamRipper is a piece of software that lets you rip audio streams from the Shoutcast Net radio servers (**www.shoutcast.com**), saving each track played as a separate audio file on your hard drive.

Because Shoutcast lets you choose a station based around a particular music genre, you can download an entire broadcast of tunes that you know you'll love. Alternatively, if you're searching for an old favourite that is likely to be played on a particular station, you can set StreamRipper to rip only if a certain track or artist is played. The software can also be integrated with Winamp, meaning you can listen to the broadcasts as they are being ripped.



1 Select a genre

Install and run StreamRipper from this month's CD. Select a style of music that you would like to listen to and eventually rip from by using the drop down 'Genre' menu. Click the 'Refresh list' button to retrieve stations playing that music.

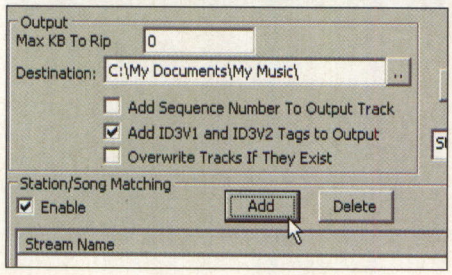


2 Pick a station

The program will now go to Shoutcast and pull up the available streams, displaying them in the List Box. Scroll through and select the one you want by double-clicking its title. This puts the IP and Port addresses in the appropriate places.

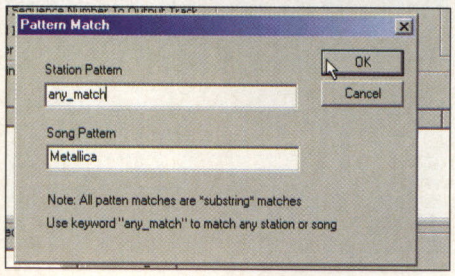
Power users' clinic: Station/Song Matching in StreamRipper

SEARCHING FOR A copy of one of your old favourites? Thanks to StreamRipper's new Station/Song Matching facility you can specify which tracks you want to rip from a particular station. So if, for example, you wanted a certain Slipknot song and knew of a station that's likely to play it, you can configure the program to only rip that song when it is broadcast. This saves you having to rip the whole stream and sift through the entire broadcast for what you want. Instead, just specify 'Slipknot' as the track pattern then click the 'Start Rip' button. Then you can leave the program running until that track comes on, when it will automatically be saved to your hard drive.



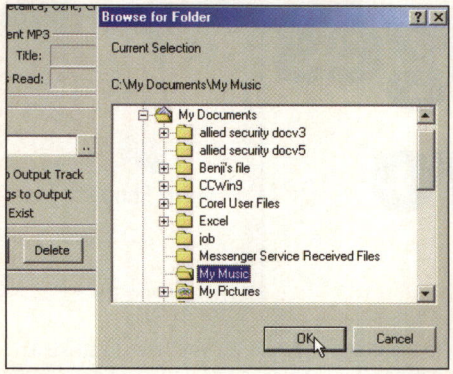
1 Station/Song matching

If you only want to rip certain songs from a station, you can configure it to only rip tracks that match the keywords you enter. Check the 'Enable Station/Song matching' box and click the 'Add' button to specify your criteria.



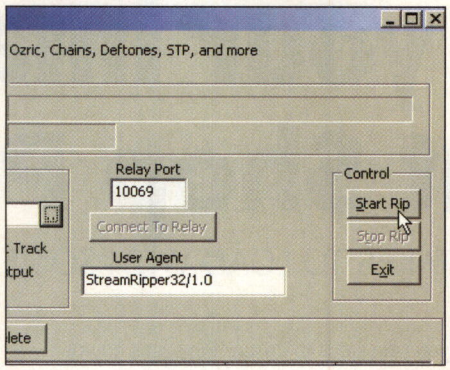
2 Enter your criteria

Enter a pattern match for the station that you think is going to play the song and for the artist or track you want to record. You can use the keyword 'any_match' to record from any station that plays this track. Click 'OK' to save the settings.



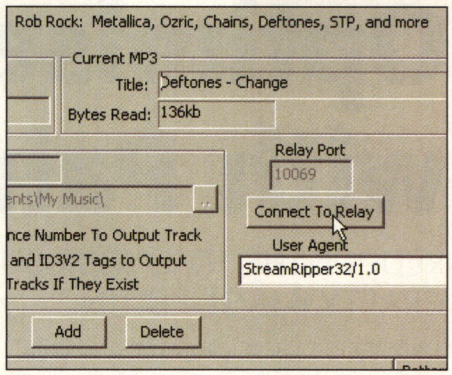
3 Specify a destination

Before you start ripping away, it's an idea to enter the name of a destination folder for your ripped streams, so you know where they all are. Click on the icon next to the 'Destination' field and choose a directory to store them in.



4 Rip the stream

The IP and Port addresses should be filled in, although you can enter these yourself if you know the location of the stream on the Net. Click the 'Start Rip' button and StreamRipper will try to connect to the broadcast and start ripping.

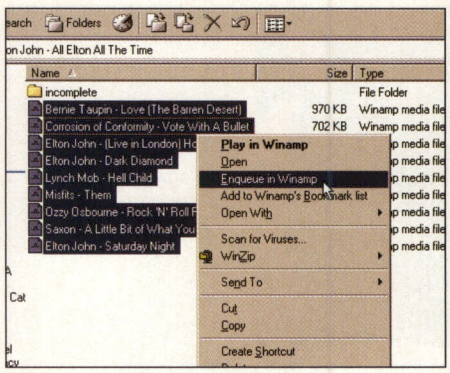


5 Monitor your stream

The 'Relay Port' settings in StreamRipper represent a locally-running server that relays the data which is currently being streamed. If you want to listen to the stream that you're ripping, run Winamp and click 'Connect to Relay'.

6 Listen to the broadcast

When you load the Winamp interface, the name of the stream you're currently ripping will be displayed in the Playlist window. You can use all of the standard features of the player to control the sound output of the stream.

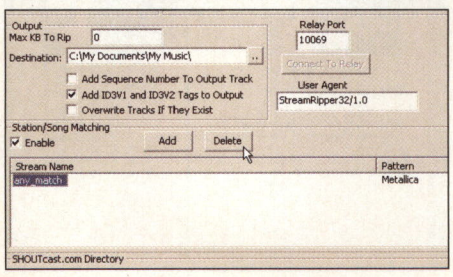


7 Retrieve your songs

To open up the tracks you've managed to rip, use Windows Explorer to go to the file directory you specified earlier (eg My Music) and your tracks should be waiting for you. Highlight them and right-click to enqueue them into Winamp's playlist.

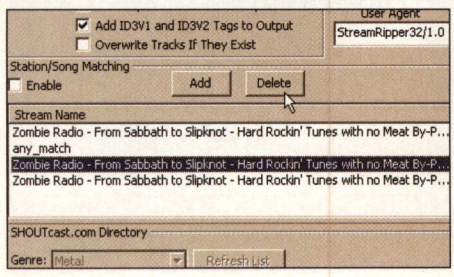
8 Easy listening

Now open Winamp to listen to the tracks you've just loaded into the Playlist. Note, that the track title information now appears for each song unless title streaming is not supported by the channel you ripped the music from.



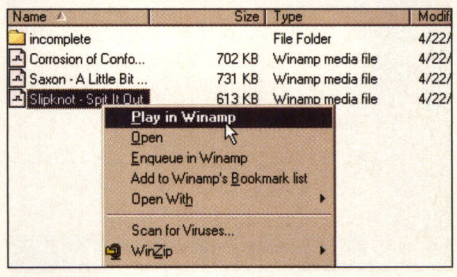
3 Rip it up

Now whenever you select 'Start Rip', StreamRipper will only actually save a track if it matches those listed in the Song/Station Matching display. In this example, the program would only rip Metallica songs, played by any station.



4 Take it off

Once you've captured the song, you can remove it from the list by highlighting the track and clicking 'Delete' from the menu. It's a good idea to do this as soon as you've got the track to avoid confusion with multiple copies.

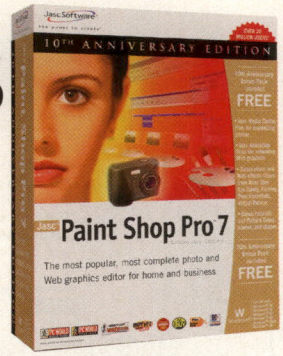


5 Music to your ears

Once all of your chosen selections have been downloaded, you can retrieve them by navigating to the directory you set as your destination folder. To hear them, right-click the name and choose 'Play in Winamp'.

In brief:
Task: Produce fast loading images
Software I need: Paint Shop Pro 7
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: Five minutes per image

Optimise your images with Paint Shop Pro



REDUCE THE TIME YOUR SITE TAKES TO LOAD WITH SOME CRAFTY IMAGE-EDITING

FOR INTERNET USERS still using 56k modems and dial-up access, it's important that you make your Web pages lightweight and fast-loading. There's nothing more irritating than a graphics-heavy Web page that takes two or three minutes to download and display.

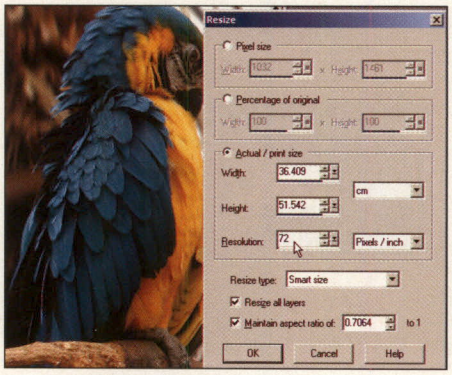
Slow sites are a big turn off and visitors may quickly leave and never come back. However, if you take steps to ensure the pages on your Web site download quickly and display in seconds, rather than minutes, your visitors will be more inclined to return.

Graphics play an essential part in most Web sites as they quickly brighten up the pages and make them more interesting. There is a downside, though, as every image you use adds to the download time, so you have to strike a balance between plain text and graphics-intensive pages.

The secret to fast-loading Web pages is to keep the file sizes of the images you use to a minimum. Here we're going to show you how to use Paint Shop Pro (**www.jasc.com**) to streamline your images for speedy loading.

1 Crop the photo

A photo will often benefit from being cropped. This not only reduces the size, which speeds up downloading, but it also highlights the subject. Select the 'Crop' tool from the 'Image' and then click and drag over the image.

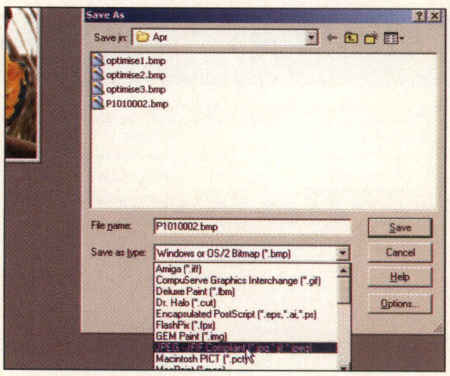


2 Set the resolution

The standard resolution for images displayed on the Web is 72 dpi, so we need to modify our photo. Go to 'Image', 'Resize' and select the 'Actual/print size' section in the dialog. Set the resolution to 72 pixels/inch and click 'OK'.

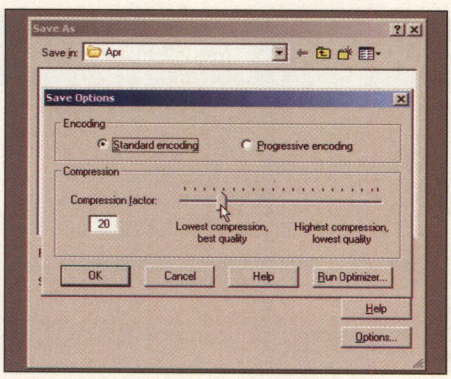
3 Resize the image

The photo will almost certainly need resizing and you should remember that the smaller it is, the faster it will download and display. Select 'Image', 'Resize' and choose the 'Pixel Size' section. Enter the width or height you require.



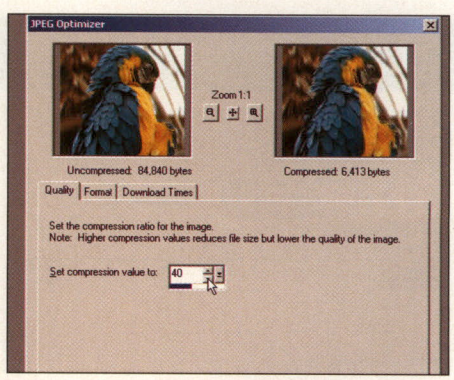
4 Save as JPEG

The best file format for photos on Web pages is JPEG. Select 'File', 'Save As' and choose 'JPEG' from the 'Save As Type' list. Enter a name for the image, but don't click 'Save' yet as we need to click 'Options'.



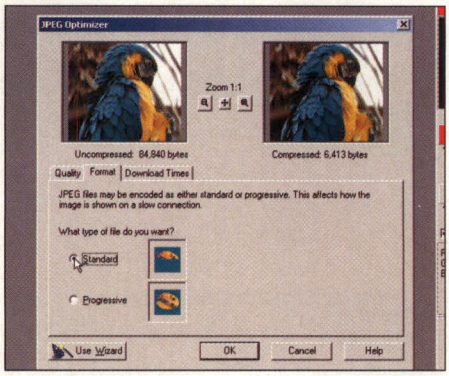
5 Set the compression

The Save Options dialog enables you to set the amount of compression to apply to the image. The higher the compression factor the smaller the file will be, but the worse it will look. A good choice is around 20.



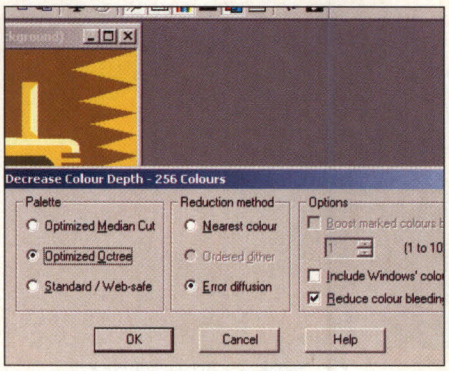
6 Optimise the photo

Instead of guessing the best compression setting, click 'Run Optimizer'. Set the compression and compare the original image (left) with the compressed one (right). The file sizes are shown and smaller means faster downloads.



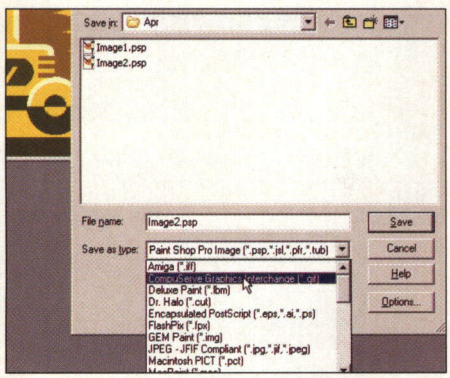
7 Choose the format

JPEG images can be displayed by painting from top to bottom, or by appearing fuzzy then focusing. Go to the 'Format' tab and select the two JPEG file types. Choose the one with the smallest file size then click 'OK' to save.



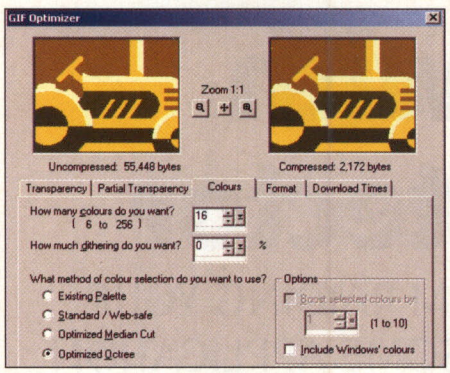
8 GIF is good, too

Images with large areas of plain colour, such as buttons and clipart, are best saved as GIFs rather than JPEGs. GIFs are limited to a maximum of 256 colours, so select 'Colours', 'Decrease Colour Depth', '256 Colours'.



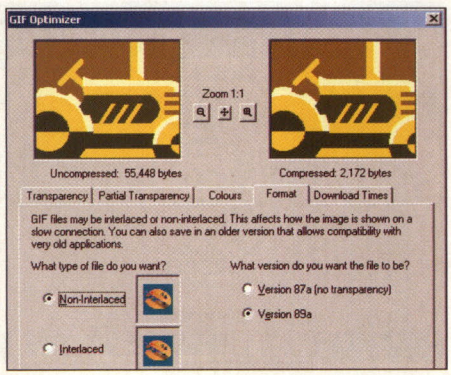
9 Save as GIF

Select 'File', 'Save As' and choose the 'GIF' format in the Save As Type box. We could accept the defaults, but we can reduce the file size to speed up downloads by running the optimiser. Click 'Options', 'Run Optimizer'.



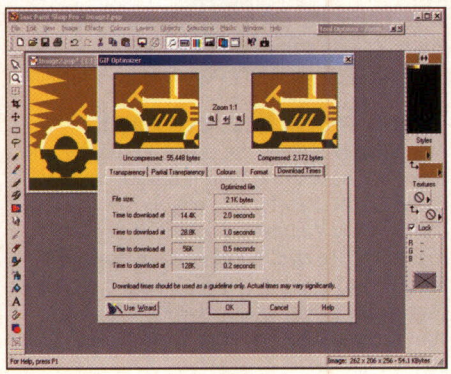
10 Reduce the colours

The biggest savings in the file size are made by reducing the number colours. Go to the 'Colours' tab and select the minimum number that still looks good. Set the dithering to 'zero'. Remember, small files download the fastest.



11 Choose the format

GIFs can display gradually or in a blind effect where it slowly comes into focus. Go to the 'Format' tab and see which settings produce the smallest file size. Also go to 'Transparency' and select 'None' to save a few more bytes.



12 Check the time

Shaving bytes here and there will clearly save time by allowing images to download faster, but how much time? Go to 'Download Times' and you can see how long the image will take to display. Click 'OK' when done.

Jargon buster

Compression

A JPEG owes its small file size to the complex compression algorithms that it employs. However, as more compression is applied, more of the information in an image is irretrievably lost.

Interlaced GIF

Images are normally displayed by Web browsers by painting down the screen from the top to the bottom. An Interlaced GIF displays using a Venetian blind effect and manages to make a slow download more interesting.

PNG

PNG is an alternative file format that can be used for images on Web pages. It offers similar features to GIFs, with the exception that it can cope with 16 million colours, whereas GIFs must be 256 or less.

Progressive JPEG

This is a term applied to a special variation of the standard JPEG image file format. An image saved in this form will display almost straight away as a rough image, but as it downloads it will gradually come into focus.

Tip!

```
<meta name="Keywords" content="">
<meta name="Author" content="Roland Waddilove">
<meta name="Generator" content="AceHTML 4 Pro">
</head>
<body>

<img src="Me_small.jpg" border="0" width="59" height="67"
lowsrc="Roland1.jpg">

</body>
</html>
```

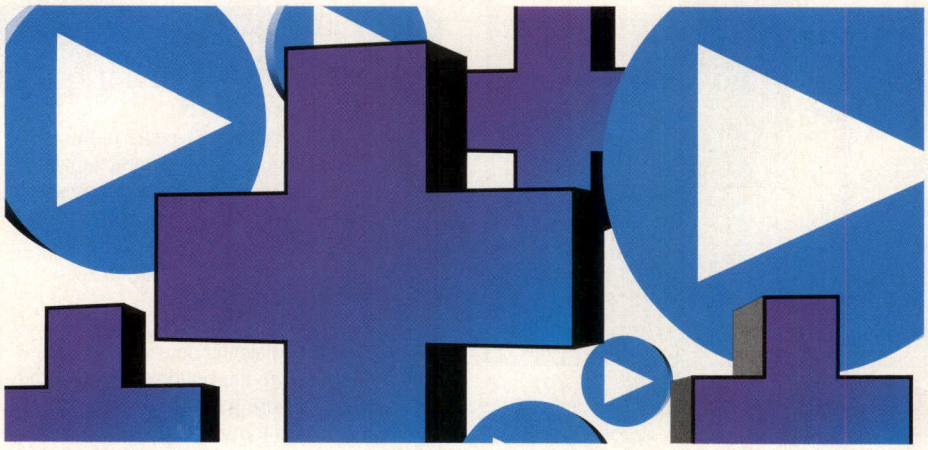
Save a highly compressed version of a JPEG and add the lowsrc parameter to the img tag as shown here

IF YOU HAVE a large JPEG that can't be reduced in size any more without degrading the quality, save a version with the maximum amount of compression. In the img tag of the HTML, add an additional parameter called lowsrc like this: lowsrc="image.jpg". This image will download and display in the browser window very quickly and while the visitor is reading the Web page, the high quality one will download in the background and overwrite the rough one. This provides the advantage of fast-loading pages and it still enables you to have high-quality images.

0115 917 0000 WebFusion
www.webfusion.co.uk seriously easy web hosting
Free, Unlimited Phone and Email Technical Support, 24/7/365

In brief:
Task: Protect your site's content
Software I need: Web Protector
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 20 minutes

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD



Safeguard site content with Web Protector

PREVENT BANDITS FROM RAIDING YOUR PAGES WITH THIS AWESOME APPLICATION

WE'RE ALL AWARE of how much time and effort it takes to put together an original, professional-looking Web site. Unfortunately, we also know how easy it is for anyone to come along, rip off your hard work and pass it off as their own. As these lazy, unoriginal goons continue to prey upon people's imaginations, Web site plagiarism is now among the biggest concerns for hard-working designers.

Stopping site burglars

Web Protector lets you put a wall of steel around your pages to prevent site bandits from making unauthorised copies of your pages or any part of them including HTML code, JavaScript, Vbscript, text, links and graphics. It can apply as many as six encryption schemes in order to make your source code impossible for people to read and more importantly, to pinch from you.

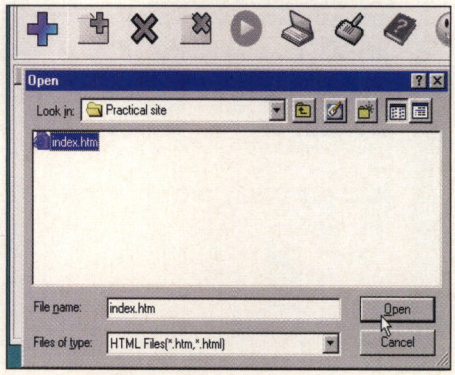
The fully-working software also gives you extra ways to stamp out content theft, allowing you to disable the right mouse-click context menu, plus disable text selection, page printing and offline use. You can also turn off support for the IE6 image toolbar and Smart Tags feature to prevent your images being stolen.

The program works with all JavaScript compatible browsers and will not affect the look of your pages. Web Protector boasts an easy-to-use interface with drag and drop support and a detailed help system. The encryption speeds are very quick and you can back up your files before running them through the whole process to guarantee the safety of your code. Web Protector also comes with support for multiple files as well as directory processing capabilities.

Tales from the encrypt

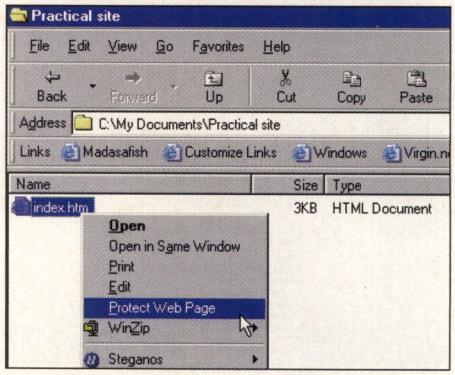
As well as giving you the power to run the rule over your handiwork, Web Protector can also speed up the transfer rate of your site by compressing Web pages before encryption to reduce the file size. Another useful feature is the ability to encrypt specific sections of your pages. This is absolutely ideal for improving your search engine ranking by controlling Web content filters.

In order to start using the full version of Web Protector to safeguard your pages, you need to enter the Registration Name as 'Practical Internet' and the Registration Code of '**2WH72D23HW2RGOOPCW3RE9**' after clicking the 'Register' icon in the main toolbar.



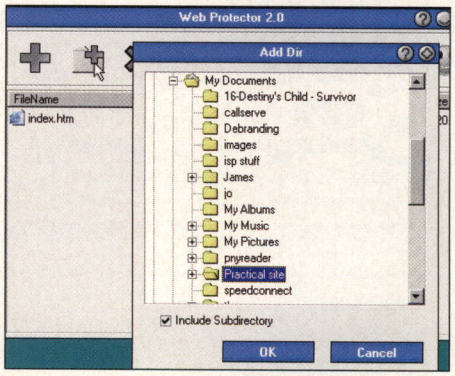
1 Add a page

Once you've installed the program and registered for the full version, you're ready to add your first Web page to be protected. Click on the 'Add Files' button and select the file to protect from the 'Open File' dialog box.



2 Instant protection

An alternative way of adding a Web page to the list of files to be protected is by right-clicking the file name in Windows Explorer and choosing 'Protect Web Page' from the pop-up menu. You can also drag and drop the document into the list.



3 Add a directory

You can add a complete folder of files by clicking on the 'Add Directory' icon in the main toolbar. Select the directory that you wish to add then click 'OK'. All the files within this directory will be added to the encryption list.

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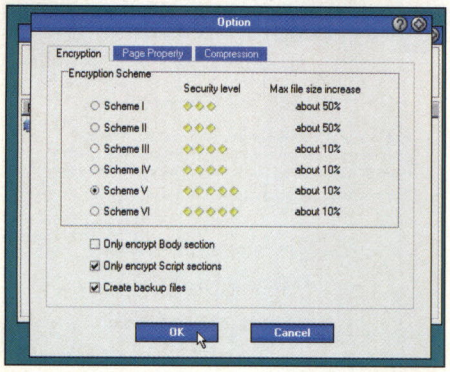
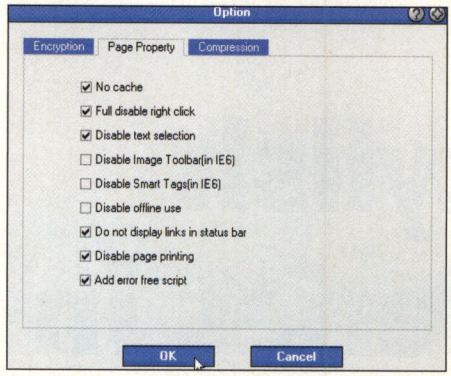


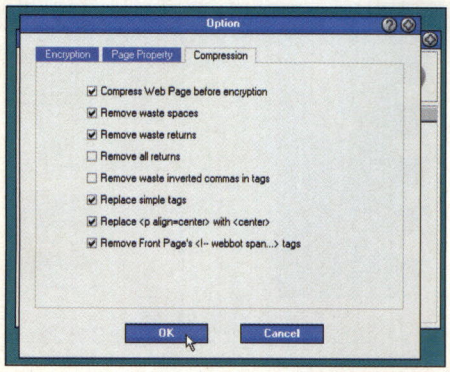
4 Encryption options

Click the 'Options' icon to choose from a number of 'Encryption Schemes'. These vary in terms of the level of security and the rate at which they cause pages to load at. You can also request to make backup copies of your pages.



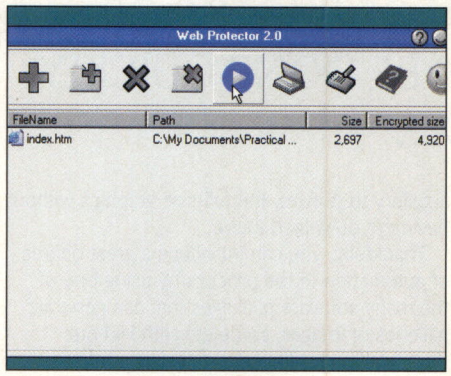
5 Set Page Properties

Next, click the 'Page Property' tab. Here, you can adjust options such as turning off caching, disable right mouse-clicking, disable text selection and disable page printing. This will severely restrict people from stealing your content.



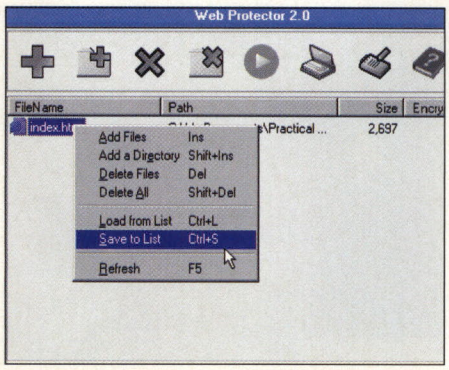
6 Compress your site

The 'Compression' tab lets you reduce the file size of the page before encryption by removing all information used solely for editing purposes. You can also opt to remove waste spaces and waste returns to shrink the file size.



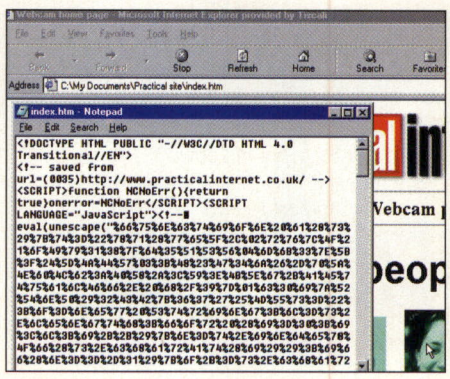
7 Start protecting

Once you've finished tweaking all the various settings, you're ready to encrypt your Web page to prevent theft. Return to the main interface and click on the 'Start' button. A window will be displayed showing the progress of the protection.



8 Encryption list options

Right-click the file name inside the list window to access several more useful options including the ability to add and delete files and directories, or save the files as a '**.lst**' document if you wish to encrypt or change them at a later date.



9 Your secure page

To check the encryption has worked, load up your Web page by opening the 'index.htm' file. Choose 'Source' from the 'View' menu and you should notice that your code contains a bunch of gobbledegook that no thief will want to touch.

Jargon buster

Encryption

A method of making data unreadable to anyone other than the creator and the receiver. Encryption is now being increasingly used to send credit card information over the Net and to keep emails private.

Compression

The process of shrinking the size of data so that less is needed to represent the same information. As a result, when you compress a file, it takes up less disk space and can be transferred much quicker over the Net.

Source code

The form in which a computer program or Web document is written. Among other things, the source code of a Web page could include HTML, JavaScript, Java or SGML. These codes could then in turn call upon other scripts or documents that are written in the same code, or an entirely different one.

Smart Tags

A feature of Internet Explorer 6 that allows users to view links that relate to a certain word on a Web page. For example, someone reading a sports site moves their mouse over the name of a particular football team. A drop-down list then appears with a selection of links such as current league standings, official Web site or related news. Web Protector allows you to disable Smart Tags, to prevent others from copying your list of links.

Tip!

Search engine ranking

IF YOU'RE CONCERNED that Web Protector may affect your ranking with search engines then you needn't worry too much. Applying the software to your pages does not affect your search engine ranking with directory-based services such as Yahoo! (**www.yahoo.com**) or the Open Directory Project (**www.dmoz.org**). Plus, by selecting 'Only Encrypt Body Section' or 'Only Encrypt Script Section' in the Options menu, your meta tags will remain unchanged. As a result, your page will be maintained for meta-based search engines. For search engines that analyse keyword frequency, word count and page content, your page ranking may be affected.

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In brief:
Task: Build a Web gallery
Software I need: Catalog Wizard
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 30 minutes

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Create stylish Web galleries in an instant

PUTTING A COLLECTION OF PHOTOS OR GRAPHICS ONLINE CAN BE DONE QUICKLY WITH CATALOG WIZARD...

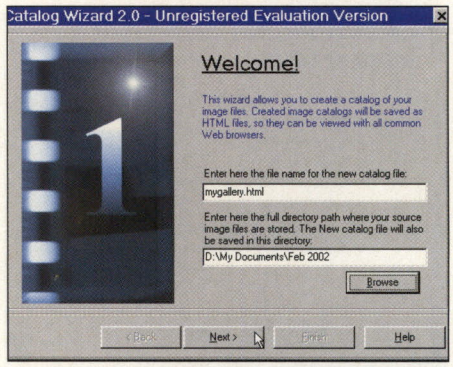
WITH THE EVER-increasing popularity of digital cameras and scanners, lots of readers will probably have hard drives overflowing with images that might be appreciated by friends or family if they were put onto a personal Web site.

Unfortunately, this can be turn out to be an arduous task if you have a large number of photos, especially if you are dealing with high-resolution images which need resizing for Web use. You might also need to make up a collection of thumbnails – these are small versions of graphics that are normally placed in a gallery to preview the full-size graphics without having to download them.

Thankfully, you can introduce a great degree of automation to the process by using one of the many software packages that can generate galleries of images, complete with laid-out thumbnail pages linked to full-size graphics. We've chosen the excellent Catalog Wizard package to feature in this tutorial, as it combines ease of use with a good range of customisable features to make the galleries you create fit in with the rest of your site's design.

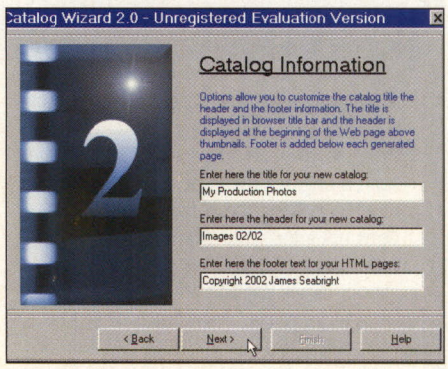
1 Launch for the first time

Catalog Wizard is provided as a 30-day trial, after which time you must register the software in order to continue using it. You are reminded of this each time you start the program! For now, just click 'Continue' to start creating your first gallery.



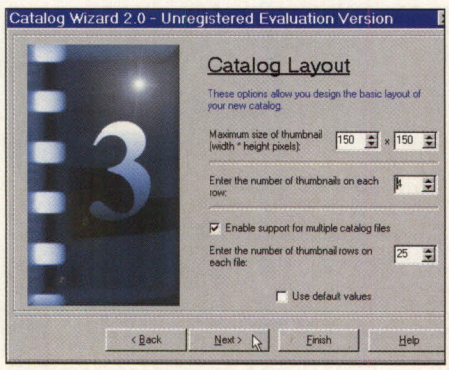
2 Gallery name and source

First you must decide the file name for the main gallery file. Enter this in the first box as shown above. Then click 'Browse' and select the folder that contains the photos you would like to turn into a gallery. Click 'Next' to continue.



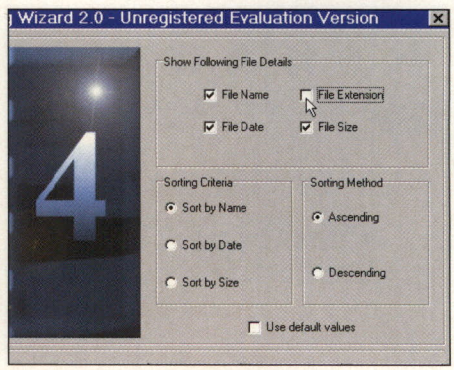
3 Labels for the gallery

Three settings here: the first one will appear in the Web browser's title bar, the second as the main headline on the gallery page, and the third as a small footnote to remind everyone about copyright. Set these as required and click 'Next'.



4 Catalog layout settings

Click the 'Use default values' box to enable the options in this window. You can then change the thumbnail size and number of thumbnails per row. It's worth experimenting to see what works for your particular gallery. Click 'Next' when finished.



5 Appearance options

Again, click 'Use default values' to enable the options on this window. To hide file extensions, unselect its checkbox as shown above. The sorting criteria and method options relate to the order of thumbnails in the gallery. Click 'Next'.

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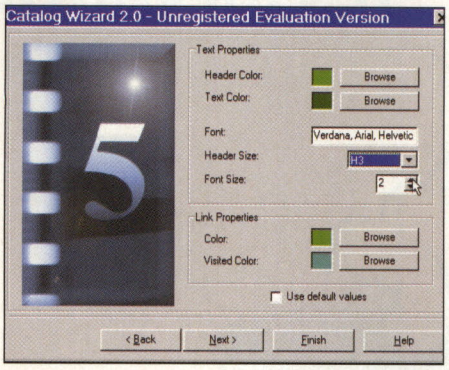
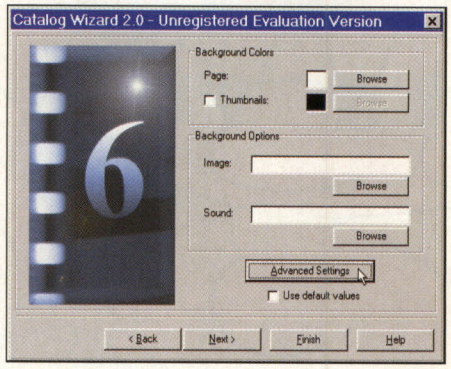


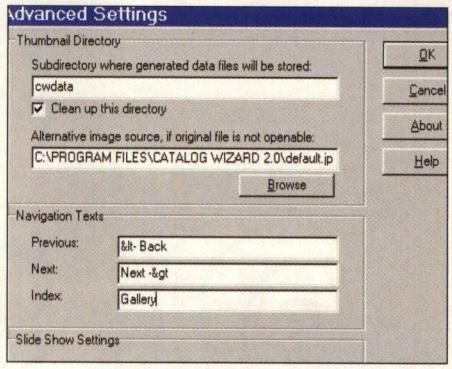
6 Text style and colour

Click 'Use default values' to access these options. Clicking 'Browse' will bring up a palette for you to pick a colour by double-clicking. The header size you select is used just for the page headlines. Font size applies to image captions.



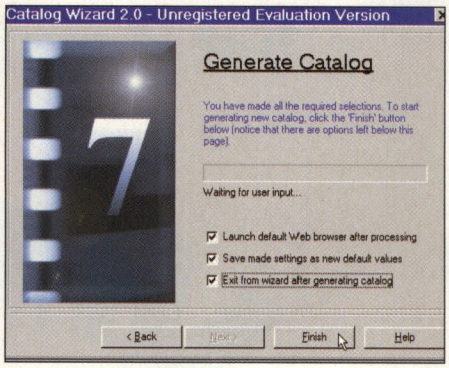
7 Background settings

Unselect 'Use default values' to access the page background colour settings. Checking the 'Thumbnails' box will place the specified colour around smaller thumbnails. Click the 'Advanced Settings' button.



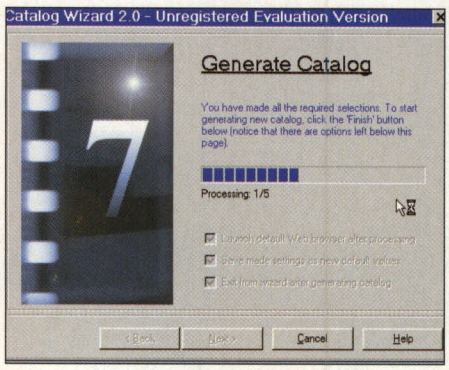
8 Directory and navigation

The program will create a sub-directory within the folder you specified in step two. You can set its name by altering the first option. 'Navigation Texts' are the captions used for links between gallery pages. Click 'OK' when you've finished.



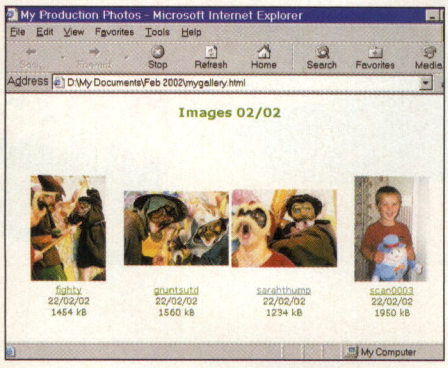
9 Final choices...

Before generating the catalog, you can select from the three options presented here. The one that saves your current values as defaults is a good idea, as it allows you to quickly make tweaks to the gallery without re-entering your preferences.



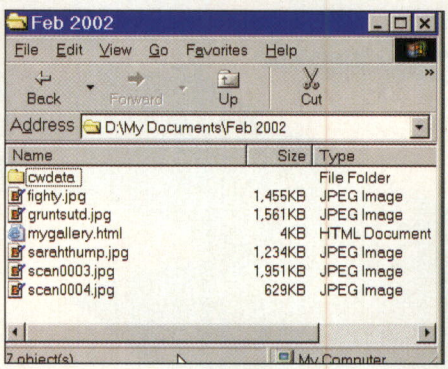
10 Put together the catalog

Click 'Finish' to create your gallery. This may take some time, depending on the number of images. A progress bar moves across the screen as the gallery takes shape, and a text message shows how many images have been processed.



11 View the finished item

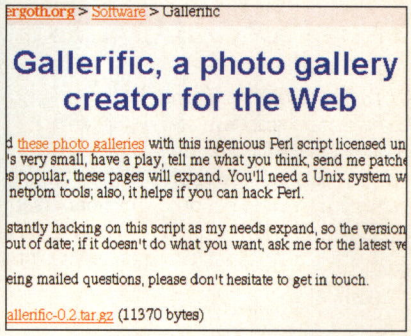
If you selected the Web browser launch option, the gallery index page will appear automatically when everything is ready. If this doesn't happen, launch it by double-clicking the gallery index page, which you named in step two.



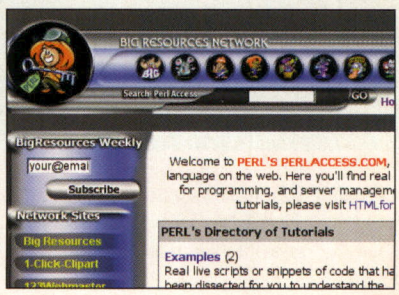
12 Put the gallery online

The files needed for the gallery are the main gallery index page and the folder created by Catalog Wizard, called 'cwdata' unless you altered the option in step eight. Now use your standard FTP or Web editing package to put the gallery online.

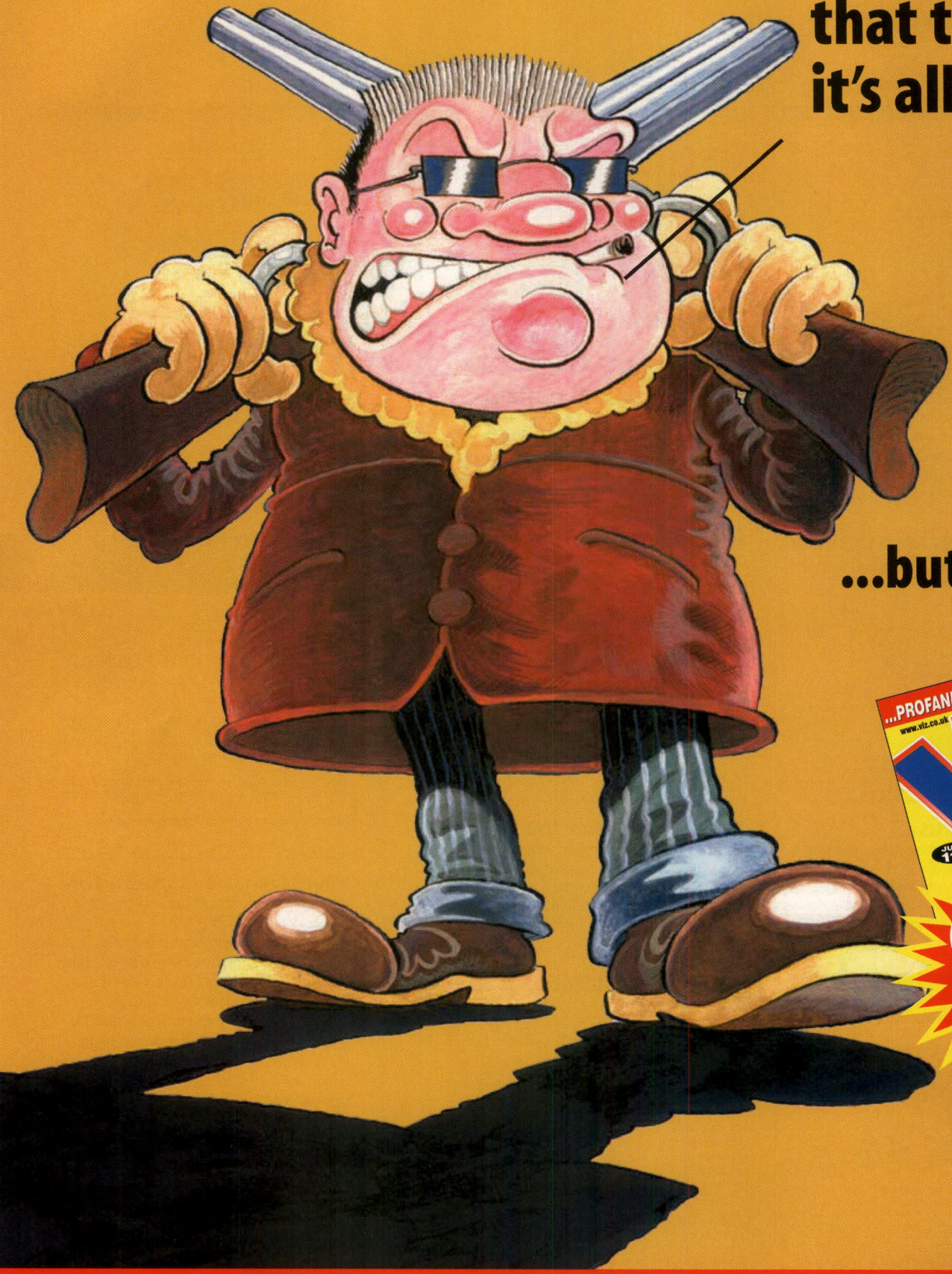
Tip!



IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR with the ins and outs of installing Perl scripts on your Web server, take a look at **www.ciphergoth.org/software/gallerific**. This site offers the free download of a nifty script-based utility that takes a folder of images and automatically creates a thumbnail gallery of them. This avoids the need to create the gallery on your home PC and then upload it, and also makes for easier addition of photos at a later date. If the world of Perl scripts escapes you, however, go to **www.perlaccess.com** for some guidance.



Viz. The mag that thinks it's all that...



...but it aint.

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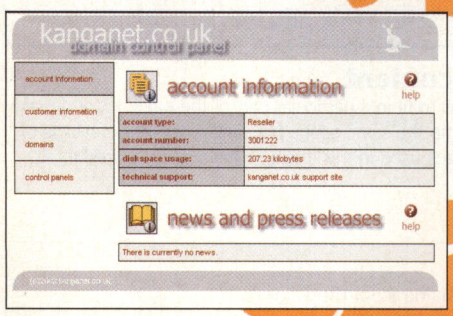
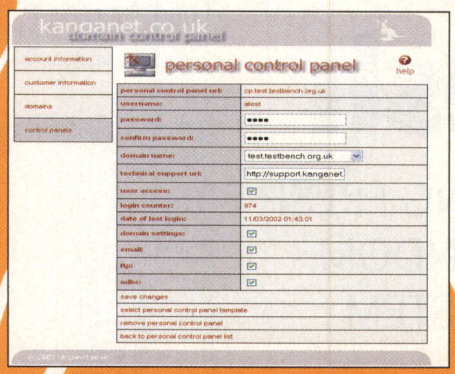
Other features include unlimited FTP accounts, online diskspace reporting, access to domain log files, ASP, Perl and PHP scripting, Microsoft Access database support and comprehensive technical support.

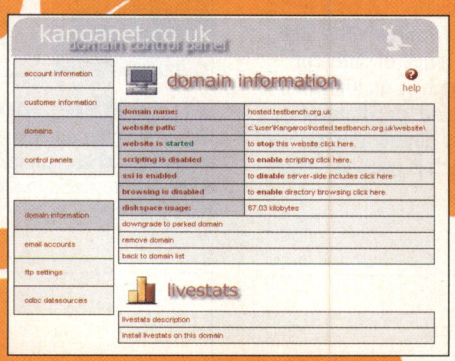


Get hassle-free account administration from Kanganet.co.uk's account information page

kanganet.co.uk
one jump ahead....



Control all aspects of your account with Kanganet.co.uk's easy to use personal control panel



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Practical Internet
Paragon Publishing
St Peter's Road
Bournemouth
BH1 2JS

Your answer should reach us by June 26th 2002. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number with your entry. Please also state whether or not you would be happy to receive correspondence from Paragon or third parties associated with Paragon Publishing.

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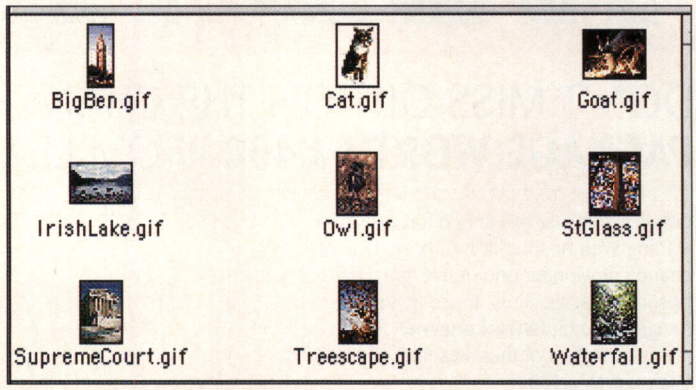
In brief:
Task: Script a random content rotater
Software I need: None (manual HTML coding)
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 45 minutes

Make sure your site stays fresh

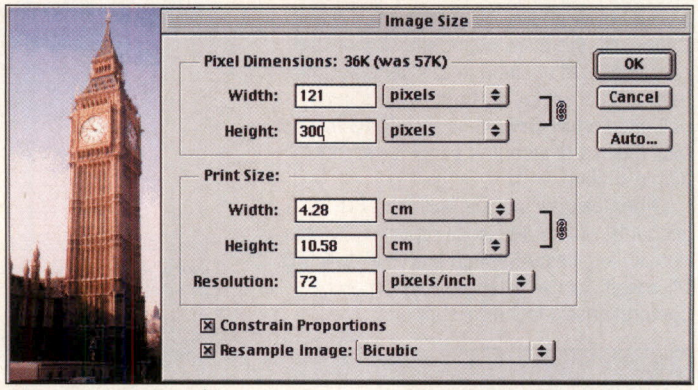
KEEP YOUR SITE LOOKING FRESH BY INTRODUCING A RANDOM CONTENT ROTATING SYSTEM

MAKING A WEB page look different each time it's visited doesn't have to involve obsessively regular updates. Instead, you can create the illusion of a constantly changing page with a little help from JavaScript. Of course this is no excuse to not update your Web site; it just keeps visitors interested in-between times! The basic idea is that you supply a range of different content options – this can be any section of HTML, such as an image tag (as used in the example shown here), a link of some kind, or whatever is appropriate to your site. You could even rotate entirely different versions of the page. The script generates a random number, which is used to select which of the content options is displayed to the visitor.



1 Gather your content

The first step is to work out what content you want to use. It's best to have as many different options as possible, to reduce the probability of the user seeing the same item twice. You can rotate a number of things – text, images, or anything that can be expressed in HTML code.



2 Refine your content

If your content needs to fit in a particular part of the page, try and make sure that each option takes up the same space (eg similar number of words or same picture size). The images used in this example have been resized to all have the same height.

```
<script language="JavaScript">
<!- -

var torotate = new Array('<img src="BigBen.gif">',
'<img src="Cat.gif">',
'<img src="Goat.gif">',
'<img src="IrishLake.gif">',
'<img src="Owl.gif">',
'<img src="StGlass.gif">',
'<img src="SupremeCourt.gif">',
'<img src="Treescape.gif">',
'<img src="Waterfall.gif">');
```

3 Set up an array to specify content

The various different content options need to be stored in an array (see Jargon buster). If you're rotating text, just place each block of text in the array; for images, insert a tag pointing to the image. This code needs to be placed in the position of your Web page where the random content should appear.

```
var r = Math.random();
r *= torotate.length;
r = parseInt(r);
if (isNaN(r)) r = 0;
r %= torotate.length;
var result = torotate[r];
document.write(result);

// -->
</script>
```

4 Create and round the random number

These lines of code generate a random number (done in line one), which will be between zero and one. Lines two to five multiply by a number dependent on the quantity of options in the array. Line six transfers the chosen option into the 'result' variable, which is written to the document in line seven.

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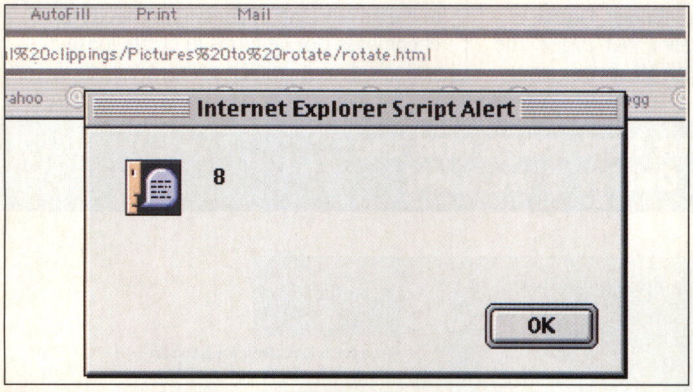
```
<noscript>
<img src="SupremeCourt.gif">
</noscript>
```

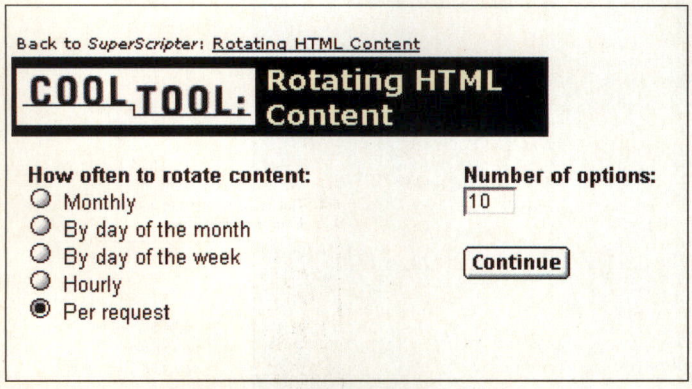
5 Cater for script-free browsers

Some site visitors can't use JavaScript – maybe because their browser doesn't support it, or potentially because they've manually disabled its use. Either way, it is a good idea to provide a backup so they don't miss out entirely. The code shown here will only appear in JavaScript-disabled browsers.



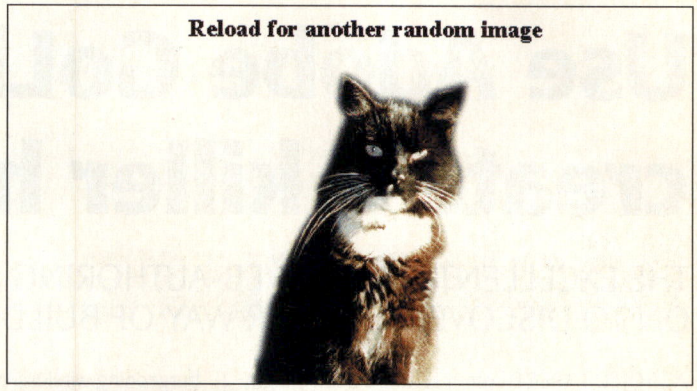
7 Troubleshoot problems

If the content doesn't change, this means something is wrong with the script, or your browser has scripting disabled. To check the script is working, add the code alert(r); to the end of the script and you should get a different number appearing in an alert box each time you reload.



8 Content rotater generator

If you have problems getting your home-grown content rotater to work, you might want to try the Builder.com Cool Tool that will guide you through creating one. It even allows rotation to happen according to a schedule. Head to **www.builder.com** and search for 'Rotating HTML content'.



6 Test the completed script

With all the code in place, it's time to load the page into your Web browser and see what happens. With any joy, a randomly selected item of content will appear, as shown above. Don't be surprised if you see the same content appear twice in a row.

Tip!

Random and ordered slide shows

You could easily convert this script into a randomized slideshow by adding a Meta Refresh tag to the HEAD section of the page. For instance, this tag would cause the page (which is called rotater.html in our example) to reload every 30 seconds: <meta http-equiv="Refresh" content="30; URL=rotater.html">. If you want to create an ordered slideshow, there's no need to do any scripting at all. Simply create a series of HTML files and replace the URL given in the Meta tag to make the Refresh move on to the next slide in the show. By setting the final slide to refresh to the first slide, you will create an infinitely looping slide show.

Jargon buster

Script hiding

The strange <!- - and // - -> symbols that you can see inside each <script> tag are used to hide JavaScripts from browsers that can't understand them. These tags make non-script browsers think the script is actually an HTML comment to be kept invisible.

Array

A variable is normally like a 'pigeonhole' that can hold one value, but an array allows a variable to contain any number of 'pigeonholes', numerically indexed based on their order. The script basically generates a random number and then selects one of the content items specified in the array based on the number selected.

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In brief:
Task: Build a home page in GoLive 6
Software I need: Adobe GoLive 6
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: At least an hour

Use Adobe GoLive 6 to create a killer home page

THE EXCELLENT GOLIVE WEB-AUTHORING PACKAGE HAS JUST GOT BETTER. READ ON TO DISCOVER A BETTER WAY OF BUILDING YOUR OWN HOME PAGE

AS YOU'D EXPECT from a software heavyweight like Adobe, the latest version of GoLive sports a variety of quality improvements and tweaks. With version six, you can expect easier collaborative Web design – or in English, you can work on a Web site with a whole group of people spread across the country without any problems with people accidentally deleting key files and folders.

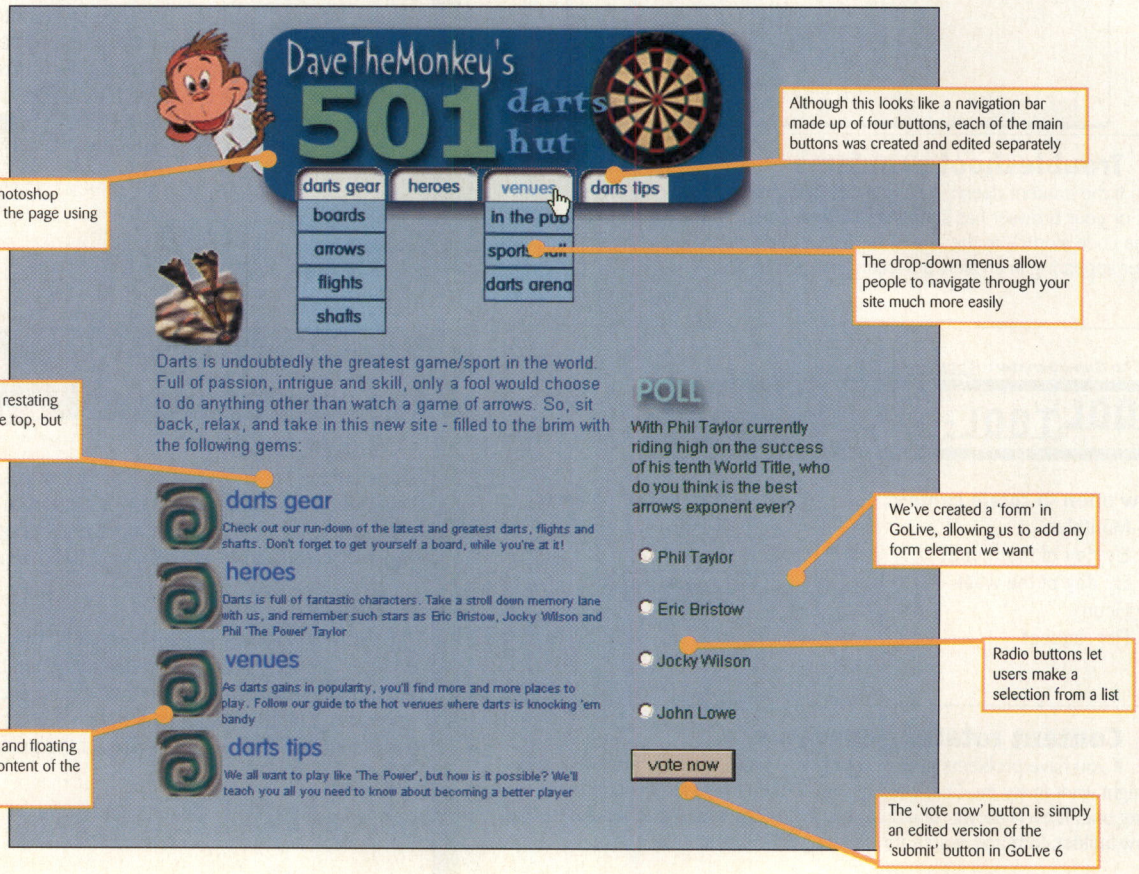
There's also a fine new WML generator and tester to enable you to build for the ever-burgeoning wireless Web market. One of the most appealing features of the program, though, is the way you can now import all manner of files into your Web pages. If you're lucky enough to own a copy of Photoshop, you can now add native PSD files into the mix – saving you the hassle of having to flatten it then convert it to JPEG.

More than anything else, though, GoLive is still a fantastic tool for creating Web pages. The ability to build your own DHTML menus isn't new for version six, but is still well worth looking into – few programs give you the ability to create drop down menus within the WYSIWYG environment.

While we're at it, it's also very worthwhile looking at the whole concept of 'floating boxes', something that might make your Web creation hassles a thing of the past. And any site trying to create any kind of community needs to encompass GoLive forms to create those visitor-inducing opinion polls.

The guided tour

How we created our homepage and the features of Adobe GoLive 6 we used



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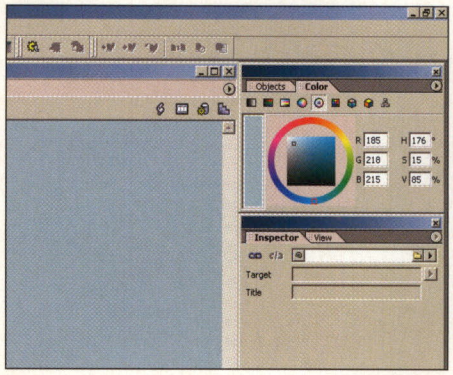
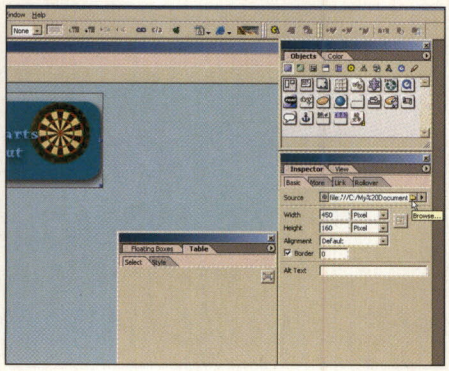


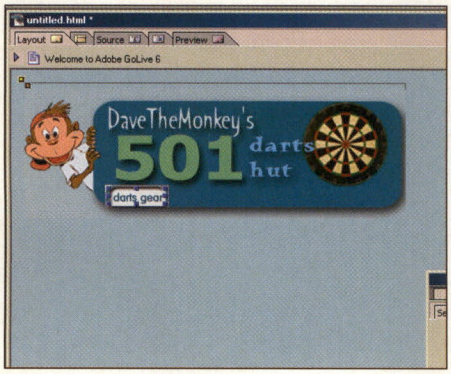
1 New page, new colour

Press 'CTRL' + 'N' to create a new Web page. We want to change the background colour, so select 'Special' then 'Page properties'. Click on the 'Background' icon in the Inspector, then adjust the colours using the palette underneath.



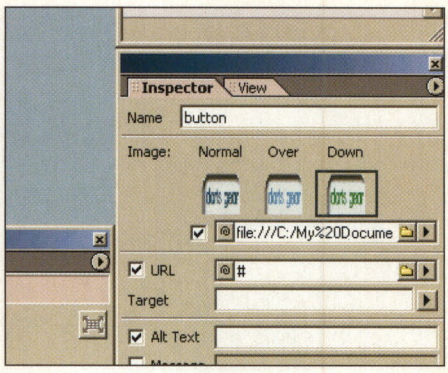
2 The main image

Now click on the 'Objects' tab, then drag a 'Floating box' icon onto the main stage. Straight off, drag an 'Image' icon on top of this so that we can place our main picture into it. Click on the folder icon in the 'Inspector' to browse for the file.



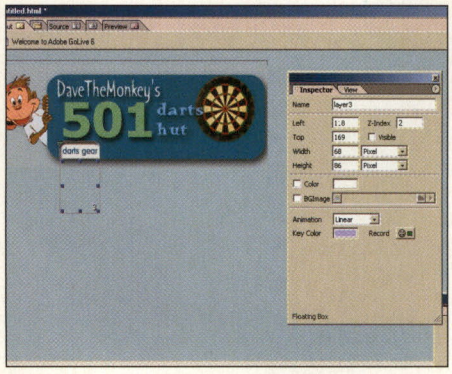
3 The first button

Add another floating box, then go to the 'Smart' section of the 'Objects' menu. From here, drag a 'rollover image' into this new box. Import your first button into here, then adjust the floating box to fit, and then position this new image.



4 Rollover states

You can now import the images to use as the different rollover states of your new image. To do this, click on each of the states, then tick the box immediately below to enable the state. Having done this, browse your hard drive for the images.



5 Create a sub-menu

Create your drop-down menu by dragging another 'floating box' onto the stage. Position this immediately below the main button, then drag the corners to resize it. After this, untick the 'visible' box in the 'Inspector', then set a 'z-index' of '2'.

6 The first button

Drag a rollover button icon into this new floating box, then use the steps above to import the different states for your button. This is merely the first, but it'll look much more professional when each button has individual rollover status.

Jargon Buster

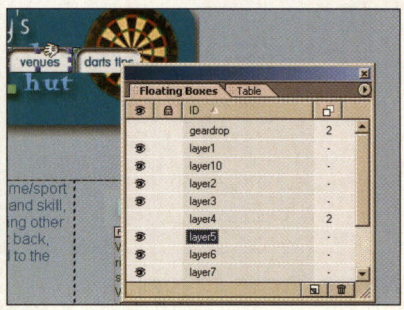
Palette

Go to 'Window' in the main GoLive menu, and you'll see a huge number of potential 'palettes' to view. A palette is simply a small box or window pertaining to a particular function of the program. These tend to be known as 'floating palettes' in GoLive, because you can place them anywhere on the page – ie they're not tied to the corners of the screen.

Floating box

Because of the limitations of HTML, the 'floating box' function is an incredibly important tool for giving your pages exactly the look you're after. If you use the standard WYSIWYG formatting, it's very difficult to place images and text in exact positions and you often end up having to create literally hundreds of tables within tables to keep any kind of control. Drag a floating box onto the page, however, and you can guarantee that your image will be just where you want it. You can position your floating box wherever you want on-screen, irrespective of other page elements. Floating boxes are also a boon for creating complex sites, as they perform the same function as 'layers' in many other programs.

Top Tip!



Cursor knowhow

You should always resize a floating box to fit the image within. However, this creates a problem – you never know whether you're moving the image, or the whole floating box. One way of identifying straight away is to look at the cursor. If you see an arrow with a box, then you're moving the image (confusingly), while you want the horizontal hand icon to move the floating box itself. If you're struggling to gain access to the floating box, open up the 'floating boxes' palette and click on the layer involved.

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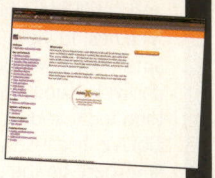
Web resources

Adobe Expert Center

http://studio.adobe.com/expertcenter/golive



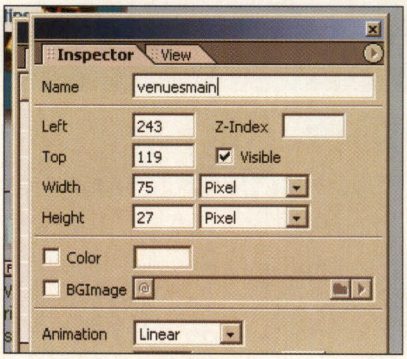
If you're looking for the full gamut of GoLive information, including some very useful tutorials, you should look no further than the GoLive Expert Center on the Adobe site. Granted, you'll have to sign up for it – don't worry, it's free – but the information held within is more than worth it.

GoLive Heaven

www.goliveheaven.com

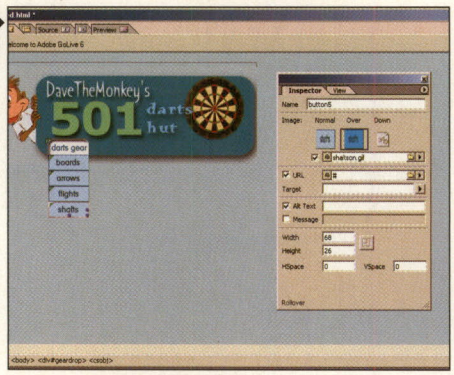
This truly is a paradise for anyone desperate to keep up on the latest GoLive developments. You'll find just about everything you've ever wanted to know about the program here, including more tips than you'll ever be able to take up.

Top Tip!



Name those layers

If, like us, you've got a whole load of floating boxes piled on top of one another on the page, it's very easy to get lost. This is especially infuriating when it comes to setting the target when creating an 'action', as you'll end up presented with nothing more than a list of layers entitled 'layer1' and so on – hardly very helpful or descriptive, is it? An easy way of avoiding this is to make sure you rename the layer, or floating box, as you create it. You can do this in the 'floating boxes' palette, but it's much more sensible to make the change in the 'Inspector' the instant you create the box.

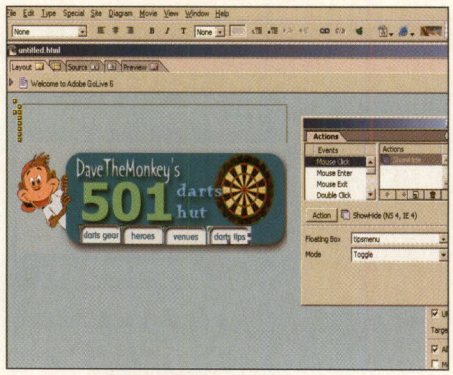


7 More buttons

Now follow the same principles to drag the rest of your buttons in for this drop-down menu. You can adjust the dimensions of the floating box at any time to incorporate your buttons perfectly. Now let's start the complicated part...

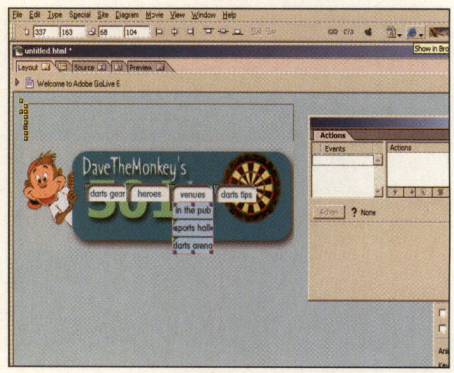
8 First actions

Summon up the 'Actions' palette. Select 'Mouse click', then click on the 'New' button. Click the 'Action' box, then select 'Multimedia', 'ShowHide'. Choose your drop-down menu from the 'Floating box' menu, then select 'Toggle'.



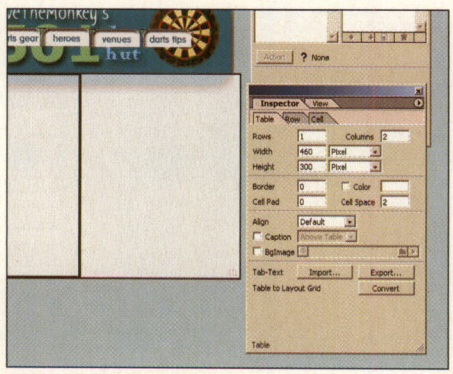
9 More navigation

Now repeat the above steps to build up a whole menu of navigation buttons. As long as you follow the steps exactly, it really is quite straightforward to do the same again – the hard part is doing it for the first time.



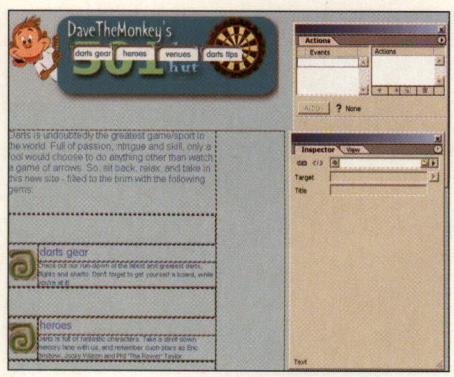
10 Previewing your menu

Click the 'Preview in browser' button on the top toolbar to see your navigation menu in action. The vagaries of WYSIWYG mean your judgements may be awry when exporting. Look at the extent to which we had to alter our button placement.



11 Page content

Because we started off with floating boxes, GoLive starts to get confused if you suddenly revert to the WYSIWYG style. To insert a table, therefore, place a floating box below your menu image (preview it to make sure), and add a table.



12 More content please

Using the time-honoured tradition of building tables within tables, you can quickly generate the main content of your home page. Notice that we've left a column spare on the right-hand side...

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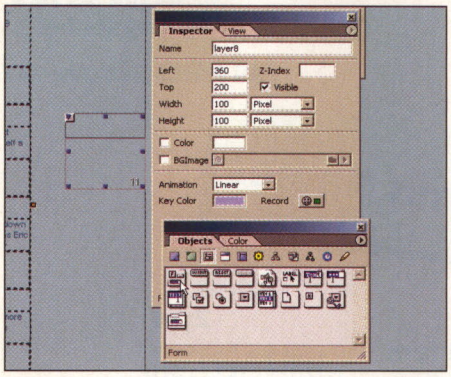
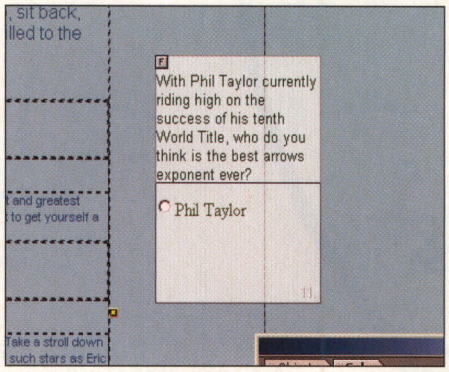


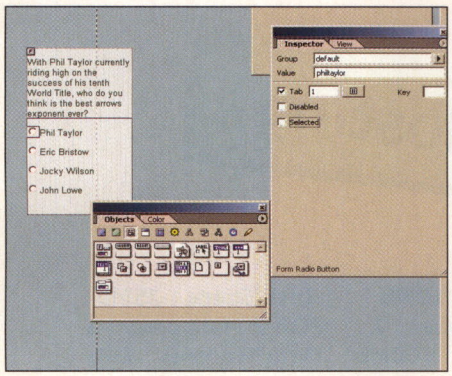
13 A new floating box

Let's add a floating box to the thin cell. Use the 'top' and 'left' values to determine the position of the box on the page. Once you've done this, click on the 'Forms' tab in the 'Objects' palette, then drag a 'Form' icon into the floating box.



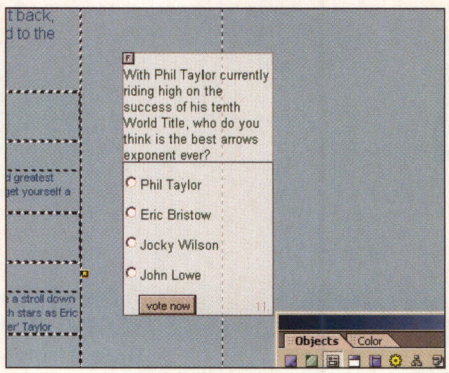
14 Start the polling

We're going to generate the script needed for an online poll, so first of all enter the poll text. Next up, add the first of your radio buttons from the 'Forms' object palette, then type the appropriate selection text next to it.



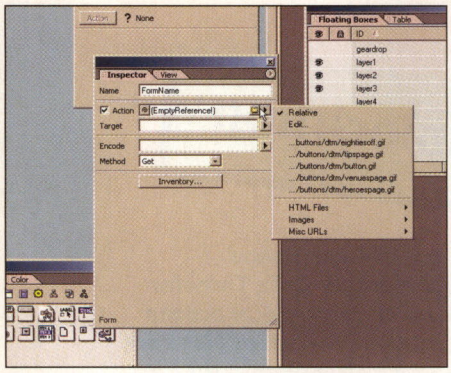
15 More buttons

Click on the radio button again and enter a 'Value' in the text box in the 'Inspector'. This is the value sent to your Web host whenever the 'Submit' button is pressed, so make it as obvious as possible. Add more buttons in a similar fashion.



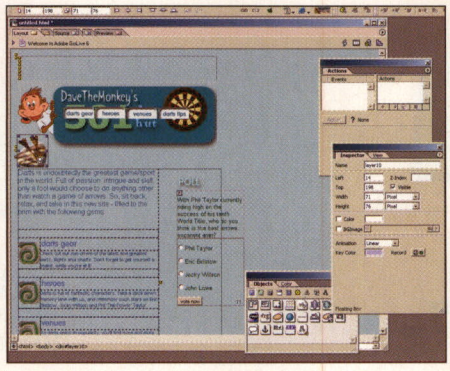
16 A submit button

Once visitors have made their selection, they'll need a way of getting it to you. This calls for a 'submit' button, which you can pick up in the 'Forms' palette. Change the text that appears in the box by entering a value in the 'Label' section.



17 The form location

It's now time to start sorting out the form's sending location. Alas, the only way to properly fix forms is to get in touch with your ISP and sort out some CGI action. Once you've done this, you can select the reference location as shown above.



18 Finishing touches

Having completed the fundamentals, all that's left to do is add some finishing touches. We've added a 'poll' icon above the poll, and a graphic above the introductory text. Now save it, and start work on the rest of your pages.

Jargon Buster

Inspector

This is the context-sensitive palette that lets you control virtually every aspect of your page elements. Because it changes every time you select something different, the 'Inspector' manages to encompass a variety of options and functions.

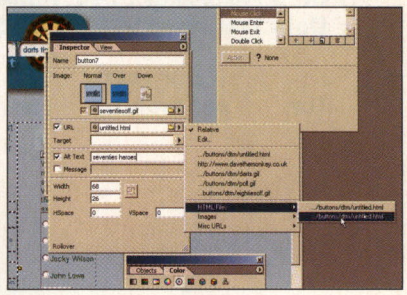
Forms

This generic term relates to the palette in GoLive that lets you add form elements to your page. A form is simply an interactive element of the page, and takes in such items as scrolling text boxes, input boxes, tick boxes and a variety of buttons. In order to add any of these elements, you first have to drag a 'form' icon onto your page.

Radio Button

Of the form elements, the radio button is perhaps the most confusingly-named. Despite the name, this is merely a button that can be turned on and off. Radio buttons tend to be used in places where you can choose one item from several in a list - and the nature of radio buttons means that you can't choose more than one item.

Tip!



Linking your pages

We've created quite a snazzy home page in Adobe GoLive 6, but it's not going to be worth much unless you link it up to the rest of your site. We haven't shown you this in the main tutorial, because it's something that's best left until you've actually created the rest of the pages. Click on any image you want to be a button (most likely to be a rollover on our site), then check the 'Inspector'. You'll see the 'URL' box here, where you can select the link. It becomes apparent now why you should link it all up only once you've created your site – this way, you can simply select the HTML page from the list in your local site folder. Simple.

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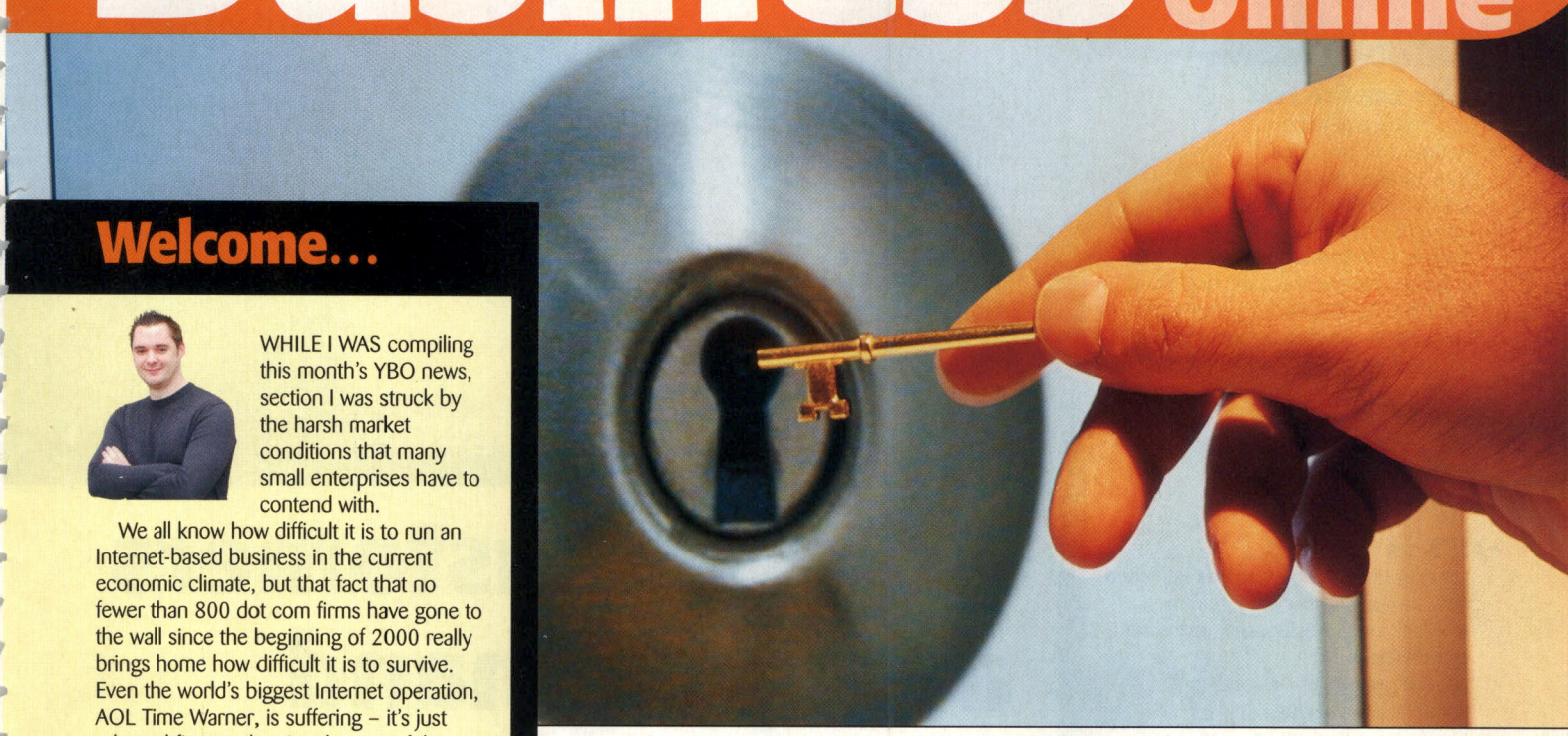

Welcome...

WHILE I WAS compiling this month's YBO news, section I was struck by the harsh market conditions that many small enterprises have to contend with.

We all know how difficult it is to run an Internet-based business in the current economic climate, but that fact that no fewer than 800 dot com firms have gone to the wall since the beginning of 2000 really brings home how difficult it is to survive. Even the world's biggest Internet operation, AOL Time Warner, is suffering – it's just released figures showing the one of the worst corporate losses of all time.

But it isn't all doom and gloom. We show you how to fight back against tough market conditions and generate business through email marketing. We also reveal how to add a shopping cart to your site with one of this month's full version software products – ShopFactory eFlash – and there's a success story from Corgi to inspire.

Stick with us: together we'll ride these testing times out.

Paul Newman, Editor
pauln@paragon.co.uk

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Pick the perfect home for your business Web site

UK firms plagued by hackers and viruses

AS INTERNET SECURITY IS BEING STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT WE ASK HOW SAFE IS YOUR BUSINESS?

SMALL BUSINESSES ARE risking everything by refusing to take proper precautions against the threat of hackers and viruses.

According to a report published by the Department of Trade and Industry, the number of hackers who have breached the defences of UK firms has doubled in the last year.

Worryingly for the accountants, the average cost of each Internet security breach to British companies is an astonishing £30,000. While this figure is undoubtedly boosted by the inclusion of large multinational operations in the DTI's figures, it is important not to underestimate the cost to small businesses.

What makes the figures even more alarming, however, is the fact that only one quarter of firms polled admitted to spending more than one percent of their total technology budget on Internet security.

It isn't just hackers that are giving firms a headache; viruses are also posing a bigger threat than ever before and few small businesses are in a position to deal with the threat posed by Internet bugs like the I Love You and Code Red viruses. Research undertaken by security experts McAfee (**www.mcafee.com**) indicates that 35 per cent of companies had spent an enormous amount of time and resources cleaning up after a viral infection and that only a third of firms actually bothered to update their anti-virus software on a daily basis.

No protection

At present it is clear that UK firms simply aren't doing enough to protect themselves from the dangers of running Internet-based businesses, but just a few simple changes to working practice could make all the difference.

Sam Curry, McAfee.com security architect said: "Small businesses are usually among those most affected by digital threats because they lack the resources to address security as a process. Also, they are often so completely focused on making their business run successfully that they simply don't have time to think about the potential consequences of a hacker or virus attack.

"In order to minimise the risk of security threats, SMEs must employ comprehensive anti-virus and anti-hacker tools and policies that are up-to-date and available around the clock."

News in brief

→Tips for the top

eCommerce developer, Actinic, has produced a free 16-page booklet entitled *85 Top Tips For Selling Successfully Online*, to help educate small businesses about the benefits of eCommerce. The booklet covers subjects as varied as promoting your Web site on a strict budget to caring for customers and handling peak ordering periods, such as Christmas. Interested readers can download the booklet in PDF format from **www.actinic.co.uk/toptips**

→It's so easynet

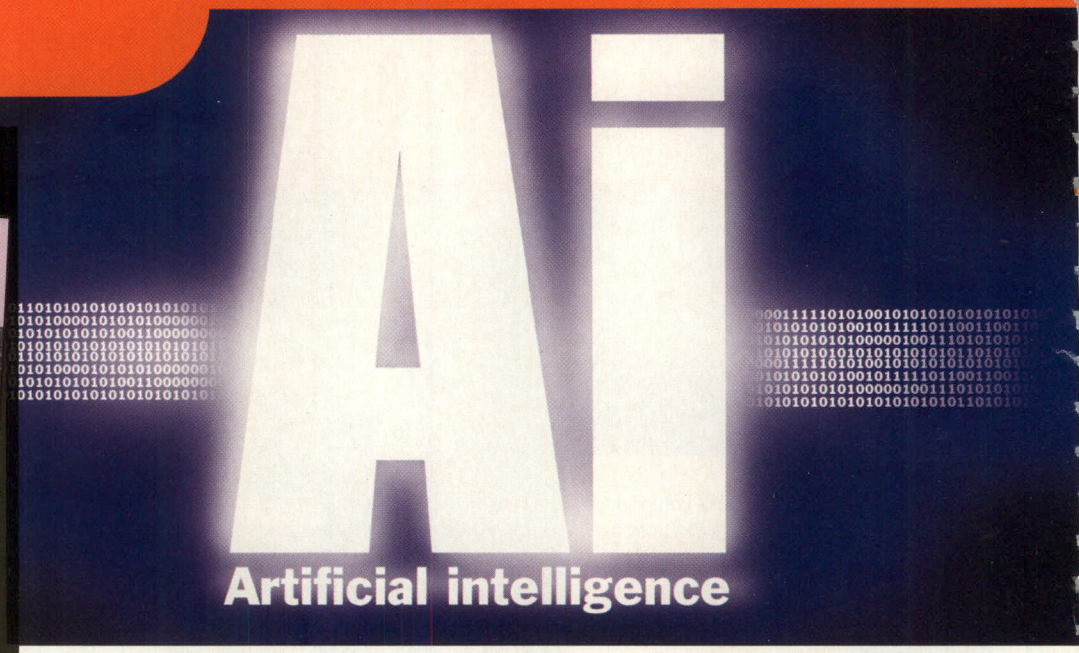
Leading UK ISP, easynet, has launched new broadband services geared towards small businesses, including a symmetrical DSL product and ADSL connectivity offering access speeds of up to 8Mbps. The Business broadband product range features a new technology called SHDSL (Synchronous High-Speed DSL), which provides identical upload and download bandwidth at speeds of up to 2Mbps. See www.uk.easynet.net

→Busting loose

According to the latest information from the States, the dot com sector is finally showing signs of a recovery. A survey undertaken by US firm Webmergers has revealed that only 18 Internet businesses went bust in February 2002. While this is hardly a cheery figure, it was the lowest amount of closures in a calendar month since August 2000.

→efax has the answer

An enterprising Internet company is offering UK businesses a novel new way of ensuring that they don't miss calls from customers. Communications specialist, efax, is offering a voicemail redirection service that allows customers who would normally hear an engaged tone to be put through to a voicemail message inviting them to leave a message. This memo is then sent to your email program as an audio attachment. See www.efax.co.uk for more.

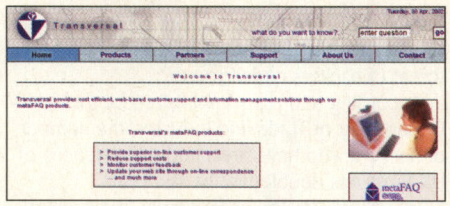


AI gives customers a helping hand

NEW WEB-BASED SOLUTION PROMISES TO MAKE CUSTOMER SUPPORT EASIER THAN EVER BEFORE

A BRAND NEW piece of software based on Artificial Intelligence technology (AI) is hoping to drag customer support kicking and screaming into the 21st Century.

Metafaq, the brainchild of Cambridge-based developer Transversal, uses AI to create a database of frequently asked questions about a Web site and its products along with all the answers. This database can then automatically respond to customer queries sent in by email with an appropriate answer.



Once the sole preserve of Hollywood and science fiction novels, AI is now helping to revolutionise customer support

Transversal claims that Metafaq will be able to handle up to 80 per cent of customer enquiries, making it ideal for small firms who lack the staff required to deal with a large volume of customer communication. And in what amounts to a moral victory for humans, those questions that cannot be answered by the system are automatically routed through to staff members who can.

"People can ask questions by responding to an email from a company or simply sending an email in the first place and receive instantaneous answers. That's great customer service" said Dr Davin Yap, boss of Transversal.

Interested businesses can find out more about the service at the Transversal Web site (**www.transversal.com**), where the system can also be tested.

FT.com launches subscription service

LEGENDARY PINK PAPER EMBRACES PAY FOR CONTENT MODEL

THE FINANCIAL TIMES will charge visitors between £70 and £200 a year for the privilege of accessing the content on its Web site from the beginning of June.

While access to news headlines will still be free, regular visitors will have to fork out for an annual subscription if they want to access specialist sections, columns or material published more than seven days previously.

The *FT*'s editor, Andrew Gowers, said: "I have lost count of the number of times business leaders have praised FT.com but, in the next breath, asked me why on earth we don't charge for at least part of our excellent online offering. Shortly, we will begin doing precisely that."

FT.com aficionados will soon have to pay up to £200 a year

Your Business Online Q&A

GERARD LISTON OF SMALLBIZ UK ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS. EMAIL HIM AT **PI@PARAGON.CO.UK**

Q I am planning to create a Web site for my business. I want it to be attractive and easy to use and would welcome some advice about potential problems and pitfalls.

David Morant

A **Research suggests that there are a number of things that irritate Web site users, so you would be advised to stay away from the following:**

- **Slow-loading Web pages**
- **Help buttons that do not help**
- **Poorly organised site content**
- **Lack of search facilities**
- **Endless scrolling to find information**
- **Advertisements**
- **Pop-up boxes**
- **Cluttered design**

It is well worth taking time to plan content and design in order to make your site easy to use and understand. It is certainly wise to assume that users will be more impressed by a site that is relevant and avoids wasting their time than by clever technology of fancy graphics. So, write your design brief before your Web developer starts work.

Q We are a small firm and pride ourselves on the quality of service we give to customers. What's the best way to ensure that we extend our service to dealings with customers on our Web site?

Sandra Dickinson

A **If you are keen to develop a reputation for good customer service, then this must apply to every point at which you deal with your customers – including your Web site. However, a Web site can be a very impersonal medium.**

At the very least, you should provide contact details on your site – including a postal address, as well as phone numbers and email addresses. You might also include details about the account management team and provide answers to frequently asked questions or other self-help information.

It is easy and affordable to include a call-back facility on your site and services such as www.humanclick.com let your customers request live help online. If you have staff who deal with customer queries, this is a step beyond what you are presently providing.

If you are concerned that you may not have sufficient staff to handle the volume of calls, you could use a well-briefed call centre – such as www.messagelink.co.uk – to handle the extra calls.

Q Virtually everything to do with my business is held on a single PC. I use anti-virus software and I back up my data, but I am still concerned that I am vulnerable to hackers and viruses. What can I do to safeguard my business information?

David Gledhill

A **With somewhere around 60,000 known viruses, you are right to be concerned. And, with the increasing popularity of always-on and broadband Internet connections, the risks facing your PC are becoming greater.**

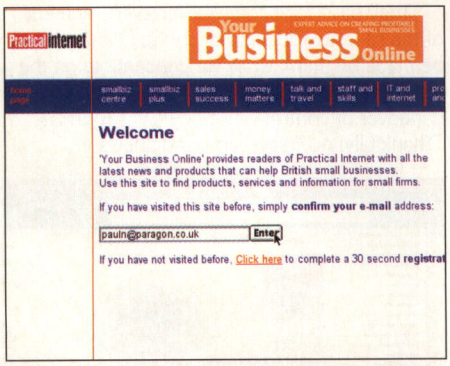
Buying reputable anti-virus software and backing up your data regularly and frequently are sensible and easy safeguards. But you might also consider the risk of hacker attacks and accidental damage to backup CDs.

McAfee recently just launched services to provide online protection against viruses and hackers. As well as avoiding the need to download antidotes to the latest viruses, your PC can be protected from loss of data and malicious activity caused by hackers. You might also consider storing data remotely using a virtual file safe. Even if you just store additional copies of crucial files from your PC, the risk to your business is reduced.

You can find details about both these solutions on www.smallbiz.uk.com – within the 'IT and Internet' and 'Smallbiz Plus' sections respectively.

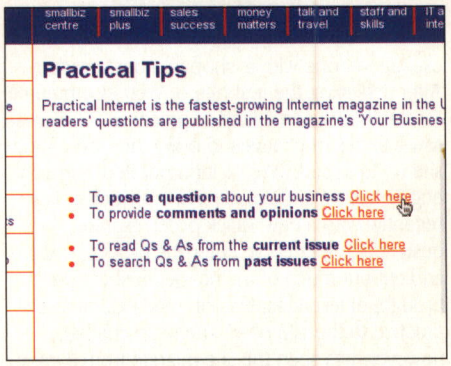
Using the new YBO Web site

PRACTICAL INTERNET HAS TEAMED UP WITH SMALLBIZ UK TO CREATE A WEB SITE ESPECIALLY FOR READERS OF ITS YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE SECTION



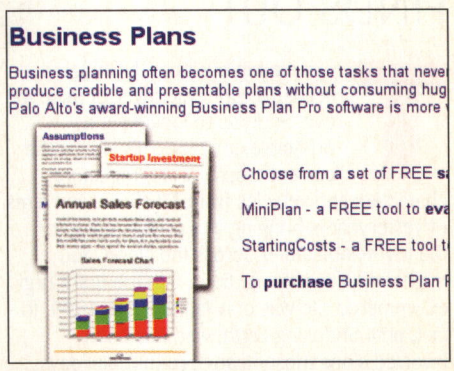
1 Register with the site

Fire up your Web browser and type in **www.yboanswers.co.uk**. The first time you visit the site you'll need to register with your email address and a few simple details; next time you visit your email address will act as your password.



2 Questions and answers

The main feature of the YBO Web site is the ability to post questions to Gerard Liston. Simply click 'To pose a question about your business'. You can also view previous Q&A sessions and even comment on other readers' problems/suggestions.



3 Comprehensive resources

In addition to content from *Practical Internet*, you can also access a wealth of resources for small enterprises courtesy of Smallbiz UK. Use the buttons on the left-hand side to find out about business plans, management and exports.

How did they do that? Corgi's online shop

DESIGNING THE SHOP SITE FOR CORGI ISN'T ALWAYS FUN AND GAMES FOR SHRINKING EARTH, AS **THOMAS WATSON** FINDS OUT

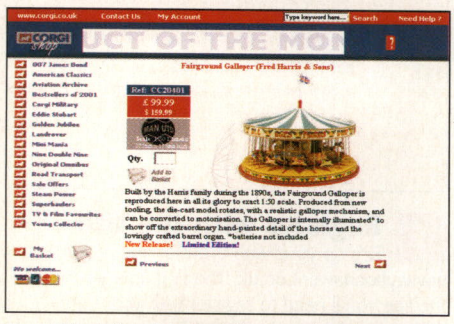
Toys are big business. Nostalgia is a license to print money. Combine the two, and you're looking at a profitable concept. This is why the current crop of Corgi miniature characters and vehicles from TV shows and films of yesteryear is bringing in a pretty penny for the toy manufacturer across the globe. You might find it surprising, then, that the first Corgi eCommerce site was only launched in 1999. In fact, until Shrinking Earth, who has been involved since those heady pre-millenial days, embarked on a couple of revamps in the past year, the eCommerce section of the site was hardly a money-spinner.

James Matthewson, Managing Director of Shrinking Earth, concedes that the first incarnation of the site was: "a very basic execution done with a 'shop in a box' product". After achieving the first rule of Web eCommerce – establishing some kind of presence – last year saw a series of changes to bring the Corgi Shop site up to speed. "We've incorporated a search engine, terms and conditions, a privacy policy recently, with a new 'quick order' feature designed to let people enter the product code, and cut out much of the hassle. In short, we've brought different aspects of good eCommerce practice to the site now." The main change, however, has seen the site migrate from a basic 'shop' site into more of a portal.

Despite the work involved in completely rejigging the site, there were only ever three people involved in the site at any time. "If I'm honest with you," confesses Matthewson, "the revamp only took us a couple of weeks work".

Built on an SQL database on ASP pages, the entire site was coded by hand, from scratch. "It's the way we prefer to work," asserts Matthewson. "We can design every aspect of the site to our client's requirements." Once the site was finished, Corgi took over, with the help of the expected content management system.

"They have total control over every element of the site. Any editorial or content changes will be made by them, while we concentrate on the functionality enhancements." So, does this handover of control cause any catastrophes? "Thankfully, no," says James Matthewson.



The stylish interface of the Corgi Shop is a radical departure from the original, which was done with a 'shop in a box' product

TIME SCALE

- **Early 1999** – The first, basic, Corgi shop site is launched
- **May 2000** – The second generation appears, with many changes, including a search engine
- **January 2002** – Discussions begin on another revamp the site
- **February 2002** – Shrinking Earth begin work on the update
- **April 2002** – The relaunched site goes live at www.corgi-shop.com

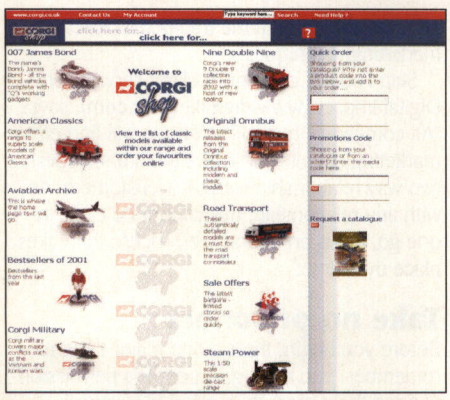
"There are only two people at Corgi who can make physical changes to the site. There's been the odd bug, which we've been able to sort, but they've never accidentally put the decimal point in the wrong place when quoting a price."

The colour of money

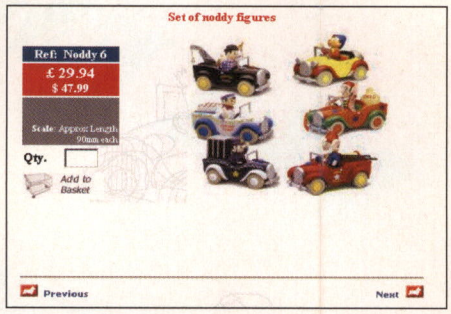
Interestingly, Matthewson admits that, despite the improvements to the shopping portal, there is still only one aim of the site – to drive sales. It's certainly not a corporate site. Even more intriguingly, the Corgi Shop, as designed by Shrinking Earth, although affiliated with the UK site, is actually a global site itself. This means that punters can come from all over the world on the lookout for a toy bargain they can buy from the Corgi Shop. A hefty amount of orders on the site, therefore, come from America. The strange upshot of this is that many of the most popular lines amongst US buyers are for American trucks and fire engines. Because these products are only really available in retail stores across the water, American collectors have to visit the British-based eCommerce site to pick up their favourite genuine US memorabilia. Makes you proud to be British, doesn't it?

At the moment, only 3% of Corgi's revenue comes from online activities. Matthewson admits that this is a small figure, but is quick to point out that it doubles the amount seen last year in Net revenues. He does, however, admit that Corgi are perhaps less interested in Web opportunities than they should be. "Unfortunately, they just don't see it as being particularly strategically important at the moment," he confesses.

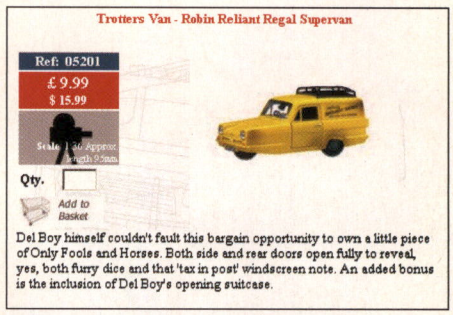
One of Matthewson's major bones of contention lies in the fact that the shop "isn't promoted very heavily on the main site". Sure enough, pop along to **www.corgi.co.uk**, and you'll have to spend much longer than you'd expect finding the link to the shopping site. You don't need James Matthewson to tell you that one of the first routes to eCommerce happiness lies in letting people find the right place to splash their cash.



Shrinking Earth MD James Matthewson believes Corgi could be doing more to promote its store through the corporate site



Making money from a Web site is always tough, but Corgi's timeless appeal attracts customers from all over the world



You'll find Peckham's finest at the site, but rest assured that Corgi's Web operation has nothing in common with Del Boy

Elements of style

It's a common situation in the Web community, but the differences in outlook between Corgi and Shrinking Earth demonstrate the design agency/client relationship perfectly. "From my point of view," Matthewson states boldly, "the different Corgi sites seem very disparate. The main site, the shopping part and the Ledo section are all different – not integrated very well at all. I find the different navigation tools and techniques you encounter when moving from one section to another quite disconcerting. I'd much rather see Corgi integrate their sites globally."

Aside from the seeming common sense of giving your sites standard styling, Matthewson concedes that there are other factors at play. "The main site was built by a different team to us, under different instruction from a different development team at Corgi." The inferrence here is that you not only need to have a unified site design but, much more importantly, you should develop a unified strategy in the first place.

Another of Matthewson's niggles with the Corgi site is the lack of community feel. Considering the eagerness with which collectors will talk to anyone about their hobby, you'd think it would make sense to develop a forum somewhere for punters to discuss the latest buys available. "In the collectors' section of the site, Corgi should make much more of the community potential."

Despite the negative connotations there, the relationship between Shrinking Earth and Corgi is a typical one. "We're very pro-active with all of our clients," claims Matthewson. "We take our suggestions for improvements to the site to Corgi all the time." He then cites the fact that newsgroup marketing and the newly instilled 'quick order code' both stemmed from brainstorming sessions held at the Shrinking Earth office.

In fact, Matthewson sees Corgi's stance on its Web site as something of a challenge to his four year-old digital company. "Of course, we'd love to redevelop all of Corgi's sites to give them a more global feel," he admits.

"There are lots of improvements we'd like to make to the shop site. For a start, we'd like to move into search integration and email marketing. It's a slow evolution, though. The Web site was something of an afterthought at first, but it's definitely growing in importance."

Don't be surprised if the site undergoes radical changes in the near future, with the resourceful Shrinking Earth at the helm. ■

Site stats

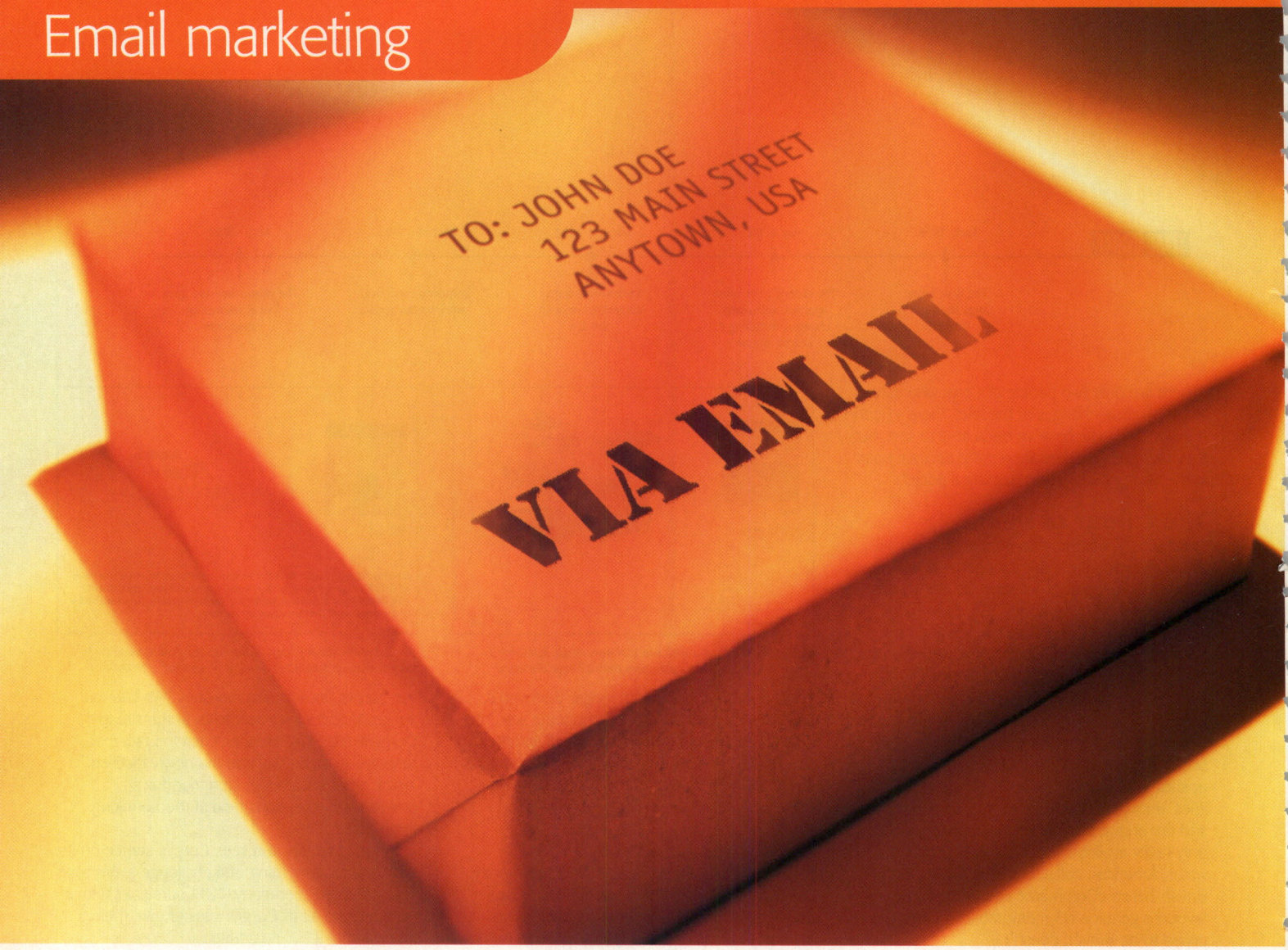
Corgi-shop
www.corgi-shop.com

■ Who designed it?
Shrinking Earth
www.shrinkingearth.net

■ How many people were involved?
Three

■ Time taken?
A few weeks

■ Software?
SQL, ASP – all hand-coded



Mail marketeers!

CAN PROMOTING A WEB SITE BY EMAIL WORK WONDERS FOR YOUR BUSINESS? JO CHIPCHASE FINDS OUT FROM THE EXPERTS

According to research agency Net Value, email has become more popular than postal mail in the UK, with the number of emails being sent and received from households exceeding letters by nearly 300 million. A whopping 550 million emails were sent and received by British households during January 2002 alone.

It's hardly surprising that marketers are increasingly turning their attention to email. In a recent NOP survey, 41% of respondents said they found email a great way to learn about new products, 36% read most of the promotional emails they received, 32% signed up for regular email newsletters, and 9% forwarded helpful emails to their friends and colleagues. A marketers' dream; unlike 'snail mail', email is instantaneous and inexpensive.

With email marketing, there's no need to commission a printer, stuff leaflets into envelopes and pay for stamps. Once you've set up your list server (the software that manages your emailing list) and gained a set of subscribers (recipients), the cost of sending, say, 1,000 emails is only marginally greater than sending 100 emails (or the cost of a few beers in the pub).

Response rates to email marketing also compare well to the traditional medias. In a recent study, Forrester estimated that email marketing was between two and five times more effective than any of the traditional direct marketing techniques.

Skip Fudura, director of client services at Digital Impact (**www.digitalimpact.com**), says: "All companies regardless of size will find email marketing useful as it allows them to establish a two way relationship with their customers. As with any relationship, this cannot be done in one go, but is an interactive process that takes place over time."

Take no prisoners

Before you begin, there's one major thing to remember: you must gain people's permission to send them marketing material by email. Unsolicited commercial email is known as

Sam Michel's Chinwag site runs dozens of email discussion lists and news alerts

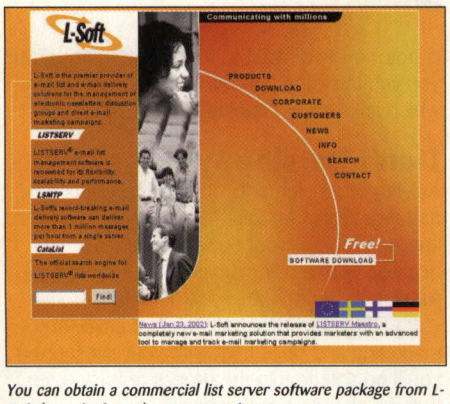
'spam', and is frequently used to promote dodgy get rich quick schemes and porn sites. If you become a spammer, you'll have a poor response rate, little credibility, and will be breaking the law too.

To build up trust with your audience, ask people to 'opt in' to your mailing list using a sign up box on your Web site and make it easy for them to opt out (instructions for unsubscribing should appear on every message you send).

If you have a feedback or enquiry form on your Web site, don't add the users' email addresses to your list without permission. Instead, include a tick box on the form that asks: "do you want to join our emailing list?". People can either tick the box or clear it, according to their preference.

Compete for attention

To encourage people to join your list, a good method is to run a competition, such as a prize draw, for everyone who has subscribed by a certain date. Alternatively, you could make it clear that list members will receive special offers and discounts.



*You can obtain a commercial list server software package from L-Soft (**www.lsoft.com**)– at a cost, of course*

Emily Dubberly of ABCTales (**www.abctales.com**) comments: "Advertise the emailing list clearly on your site. Offer added value – for example, a 'fact of the day' that's relevant to your subject, or an 'offer of the day' if you're running an eCommerce site."

She adds: "Have a message saying that 'you can forward this or get your friends to sign up by clicking on this link.' If you're using some form of tracking, you could run an incentive for the user who gets the most people to sign up each month."

Buying a list

For a quicker start to your email marketing campaign, you can buy an existing list from a broker. Struan Robinson of Ijack (**www.ijack.com**) advises: "Identify your audience, then investigate buying a list from a Web site that has similar demographics to your own."

He emphasises: "Be careful to check that the site you're buying from includes a Data Protection Act opt-out box. Most sites are good with this process and won't sell you an unsolicited list." Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you can't supply a list to third parties, unless the subscribers agreed 'I would like other relevant companies to send me information' when they joined.

"FOLLOW THE SIMPLE RULES OF EMAIL MARKETING AND GET READY TO REAP THE REWARDS"

Liz Williams of the company Hyperjuju (**www.hyperjuju.com**) advises: "Ensure that the supplier is reputable and the addresses are live and of good quality. We always recommend testing lists before undertaking a campaign." You should also check whether there are any restrictions to a bought list – for example, what you can send and how many times you can use it.

What to distribute

If you're considering email marketing, it requires you to be creative and on-the-ball. Marketing emails can include newsletters, links to product information, animations, games, vouchers, surveys, consumer polls – even sound and video. If consumers like your content, they may forward it to their friends, although it's getting increasingly harder (and more expensive) to make an impact with 'viral marketing' campaigns.

Skip Fudura says: "The trick is identifying what the customers will perceive as added value and delivering on that. For example, every Monday a grocery chain could email you suggested menus for the week and a shopping list to match. The customer would maybe go

CASE STUDY

Porters English Restaurant

PORTERS ENGLISH RESTAURANT in London, run by the Earl of Bradford, was recently chosen by the DTI as an example of how e-marketing can help a hospitality business, and was a finalist in the National E-Commerce Awards. The company uses email marketing to attract customers and reduce PR costs.

Says Richard, Earl of Bradford: "We have two email newsletters – London Lantern (**www.londonlantern.com**), which has just over 30,000 subscribers, and the quarterly London Portrait, which has around 9,000 subscribers. People join both using tick boxes on our sites. We use the newsletters to plug Porters, but not too strongly, as we don't want to destroy our credibility.

"At the restaurant, we collect business cards. We have a sign saying 'please leave your card here to be kept updated with what's happening at Porters', so there's no question of misuse. The subscribers receive regular special offers, news and details of changes. Every time we sent a mailing, we see a rise in visits to the Web site and the restaurant afterwards"

"I'd advise everybody to use email marketing, but look into it carefully and work out what it could achieve for them, rather than blindly following others or trying to do something too flashy."

Do's and don'ts

DON'T

- ✖ Send spam (unsolicited commercial messages)
- ✖ Breach the Data Protection Act by passing your list to third parties
- ✖ Send attachments
- ✖ Send too high a volume of messages (10 a day would obviously be bad!)
- ✖ Give away all your news on your list messages – instead, entice people on to your site using short 'teasers'

DO

- ✔ Offer an incentive or reward for people to join your list
- ✔ Make it easy for people to unsubscribe at any time
- ✔ Assess what message format/content works best for your subscribers
- ✔ Include a call to action if you're trying to sell something
- ✔ Brush up on your copywriting and layout skills for maximum impact

Email marketing

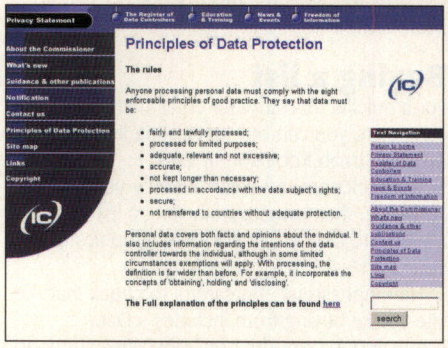
there because they would know the grocery chain carried all those ingredients."

Emily Dubberly says: "Marketing straight B2C propositions can be relatively simple. For example, Ryan Air regularly emails details of its latest offers to list members. B2B campaigns tend to look at the wider industry and offer something in terms of news, features, case studies and research, rather than going for the straight sell. In this case, it's generally a question of building loyalty and reputation – more of a slow burn."

Email newsletters

Email newsletters are popular as a B2C and B2B brand-building tool. Newsletters can highlight new content on a Web site and establish your company as an expert in its field. Rather than giving away whole stories on your newsletter, think about providing teasers that will draw people to your site. "Keep your newsletter short, with 20-50 words per 'chunk' of copy and a URL below," advises Emily. Many news feeds, such as Ananova (**www.ananova.com**) and NME (**www.nme.com**), use this tactic successfully.

Sam Michel of online marketing specialist, Chinwag (**www.chinwag.com**), says: "Featuring links to site content can get visitors clicking again and again, but only if they're sufficiently tempted. A great example is the much-publicised Friends Reunited (**www.friendsreunited.com**), where members can find long lost schoolmates. Hearing that 'eight new members have joined your school listing' is enough to get users clicking."



Don't breach the 1998 Data Protection Act – unless you want to end up in court

Emily Dubberly adds: "Make the content compelling. What's the most popular search term on your site? Which areas attract the most traffic? Use these as hooks. Listen to your readers – ask what they'd like in the newsletter. Try different formats and see what attracts the most visitors. Also try sending out the newsletter at different times of day and week to identify the most effective."

Formatting your message

You can choose HTML or text formatting for your emails. HTML is more flexible but it will render differently in certain email programs and it's heavier on production resources. Text works well for newsletters where people just want a straightforward information download.

Skip Fudura says: "How a company communicates through email is based on the needs of its customer base. A medical devices firm will communicate differently than a consumer retail company such as Gap. The medical devices firm will use an informational design with few images, whereas Gap may use a more promotional approach with many images and an HTML design that supports its brand."

Liz Williams says: "The decision about whether to go HTML or text depends on your audience's preference, the message you're trying to convey and practical considerations such as the degree of tracking you require. Text is notoriously difficult to track while, with HTML, you can track the percentage opened and which links have attracted what people."

Don't be sloppy

As with other elements of your marketing mix, metaphorically dot your 'i's and cross your 't's and don't forget your spell checker. Just because you're using email, there's no excuse for sloppily written, badly structured material.

If you follow the simple rules of email marketing and build trust with your subscribers, you'll be able to join the droves of businesses that are already reaping the rewards. ■

Web sites that can help

Direct Marketing Association
www.dma.org.uk
Data Protection Guidelines
www.dataprotection.gov.uk
Clickz
www.clickz.com
Salinka.com
www.salinka.com/html/writing.htm
Wilson Internet
www.wilsonweb.com
Marketing Sherpa
www.marketingsherpa.com
Viral Monitor
www.viralmonitor.com

What is viral marketing?

SAM MICHEL OF CHINWAG EXPLAINS THE BASICS:

"WORD OF MOUTH recommendation happens all the time offline. When you're using email it's even more effective, because you're able to act instantaneously. With a bit of luck and planning, the email being forwarded to friends and colleagues contains your link and a recommendation. This carries a lot of weight and emotional buy-in. It's called viral marketing, as it has many characteristics of biological viruses.

"If all goes well and people forward your email, the potential audience is enormous. If one person sends it to two of their friends, who forward it to two of their friends, in just four steps you're reaching 279 people. When Virgin Cinemas ran a promotion to give away 20,000 free cinema tickets, they kicked it off by asking staff to email 50 friends each. Within four hours all 20,000 tickets had been snapped up.

"A well-designed game can bring visitors to your site in droves. E-cards can also be useful, as they allow senders to add a personal message before forwarding it to their friends and colleagues.

"Remember: an email from a trusted source that positively references you is marketing that money can't buy."

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In brief:
Task: Build an online shop
Software I need: ShopFactory eFlash 5.4
Difficulty: Easy
Time I need: One hour

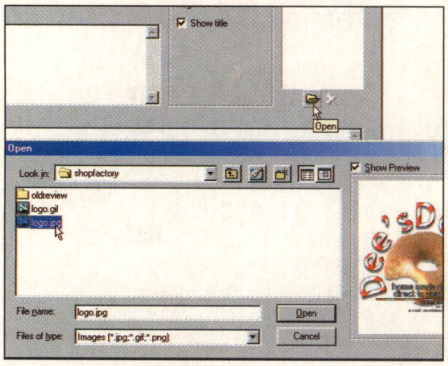
Build an online store in under an hour

STOP PUTTING IT OFF, AND START PUTTING IT UP. USE SHOPFACTORY TO GET YOUR SHOP ON THE WEB WITH THE MINIMUM OF FUSS AND TIME...

IT'S OFTEN THE case that a lack of design skills will prevent businesses setting up an online shop. ShopFactory is a program that can fix this (a fully working version of which is on this issue's CD-ROM). It enables you to build a swish online presence in about an hour, and requires no design skills or knowledge of HTML required. It will even set-up a payment system.

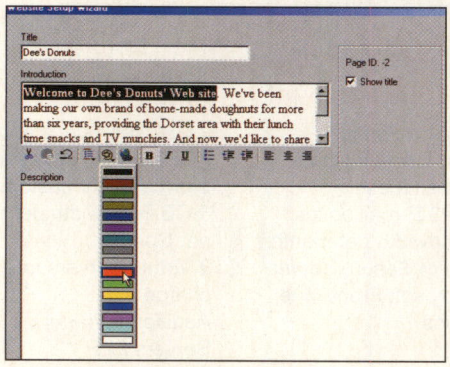
Although the eFlash version on the CD-ROM is free, you will still need to register your details and get a password emailed to you, if you intend to use the software after 30 days. To do this, connect to the Net, start ShopFactory, and press the 'Register' button. Fill in the form online, submitting your email address and contact details. A code will then be sent to you.

To accept online orders, install and use a PGP key (**www.pgpi.org**) so you can send and receive encrypted emails. Your business also needs to be able to handle credit card orders offline. Once you've installed a PGP key, register it with 3D3 (**www.shopfactory.com**), run ShopFactory and choose the 'Free SSL with PGP' option and enter your PGP key there, too.



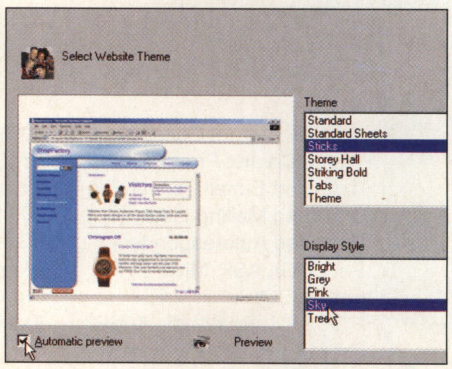
1 The welcome mat

Upon launching, ShopFactory's shop wizard will open. Click on 'Create a new Web site or shop' and, in the first of the steps, enter the shop's name into the 'Title' box and then press the 'Open' button to load your company logo.



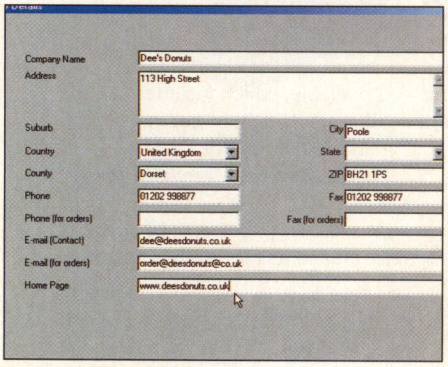
2 Introduce yourself

Underneath, you'll find two spaces for an introduction and optional store description. When you click in these areas, a toolbar will appear beneath it. This lets you adjust the text properties, such as its colour, emphasis and alignment.



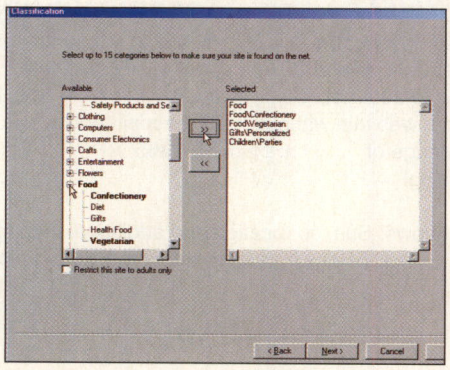
3 Prefabricated shop floors

Press 'Next' to select a template for your site. In most cases, depending on the 'Theme' you select from the top menu, you will have a choice of display styles underneath, enabling you to customise the colour scheme.



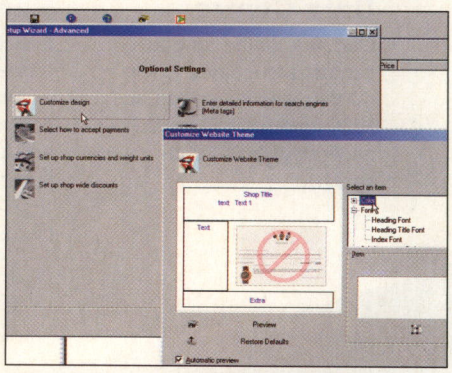
4 Who are you?

In the next step you must enter your company details. The only one that's compulsory is selecting a country from the pull-down menu, so omit any of the others that aren't applicable and press the 'Next' button again to continue.



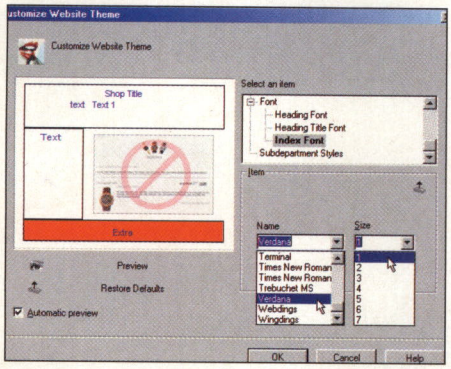
5 What are you selling?

You now have to select at least one category to describe your shop. Select the option from the left-hand panel and press the top arrow button to add it. Some options also have sub-categories. Click on the 'plus' icon to reveal them.



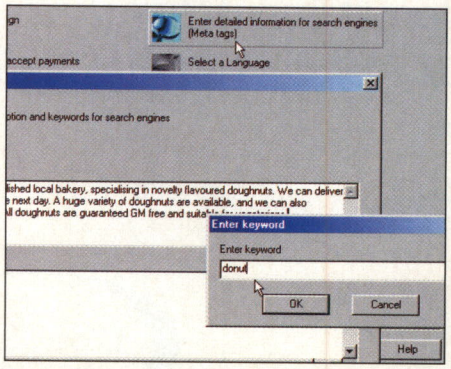
6 Final design tweaks

The final step is where you can optionally adjust the shop's design and implementation. If you want to change the fonts and colours in the template, click 'Customise Design'. Use the 'Item Selector' menu to choose the property to adjust.



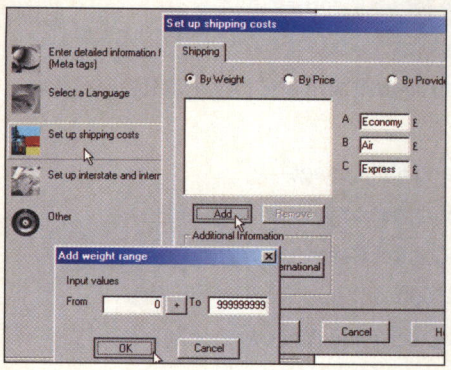
7 Pick fonts and colours

A set of tools will appear underneath this menu, depending on the property you've selected. For example, selecting any of the font options lets you alter its typeface and relative HTML size. Attributes that are changed will appear in bold.



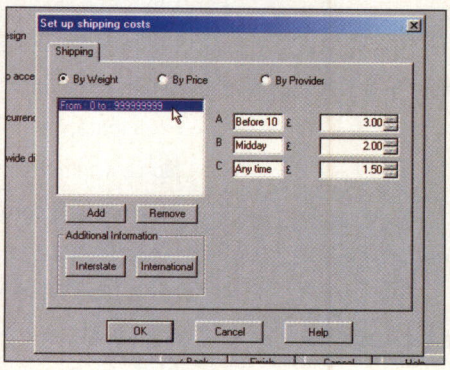
8 Search engine descriptions

Although you've described your shop, this won't actually set up any Meta tags for you. To do this, press 'Enter detailed information…'. Enter a text description for your store in the top box, then press the 'Plus' button to add individual key words.



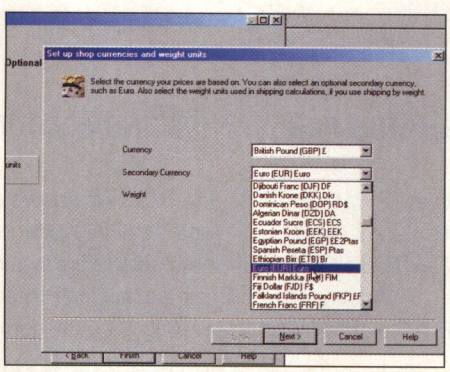
9 Post and packaging

An important aspect to define is 'Shipping Costs'. Click the button in the menu, and choose whether to charge by weight or price. The 'Add' button sets your thresholds. Set the maximum to the highest so you set a flat rate for all orders.



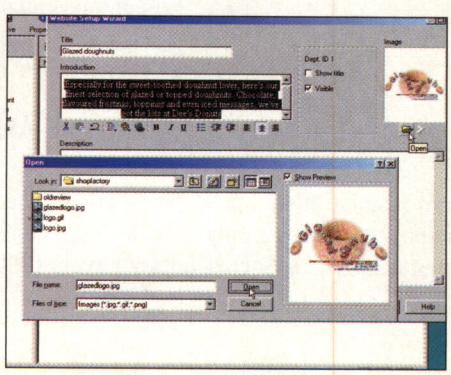
10 Work out a price

Highlight this newly created shipping cost band and the three post options to the right will become available. Edit the names to something more appropriate (first, second, and business class, for example), and enter their costs.



11 Pounds and pence

Finally, click on 'Set up Shop currencies' and use the pull-down menus to choose the currencies in which you intend to trade. Click on the 'Next' button to select which other currencies will appear in ShopFactory's converter.

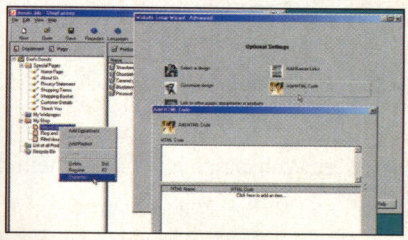


12 Your first department

Press 'Finish' to close the wizard (you can re-edit any of these options from the 'Properties' button), then double-click the 'Department 1' icon in the main left panel. As per the home page, you can add images and a description to your department.

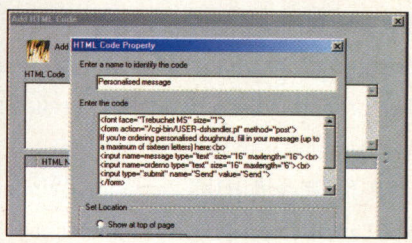
Power users' clinic

ALTHOUGH YOU CAN'T enter HTML directly into the introductory text passages for departments and other such pages ('About Us', 'Terms and Conditions' and 'Home Page', for example), ShopFactory does let you add your own mark-up using a tool in the page's 'Optional Settings' dialog. It is also possible to add further links to other pages within your shop, or even to individual products. The latter option enables you to cross-reference one product with another, so you can recommend a different item.



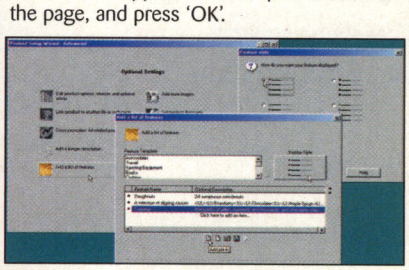
1 Your own HTML

Double-click on the page in the left-hand site panel that you want to edit, and press the 'Next' button to access its optional settings. Press the 'Add HTML code' button and, in the dialog box that opens, push the 'Add' button.



2 Reusable code

Enter a label for your HTML segment (it can be reused for other pages), and in the bottom space, type the mark-up. Click on the appropriate radio button to determine whether this appears at the top or bottom of the page, and press 'OK'.



3 List the features

One useful tool is the ability to add a list of features. In the product's Optional Settings dialog, click on 'Add a list of features'. Using this tool, you can add a pre-defined list of features, such as the ISBN number, author and genre of a book.

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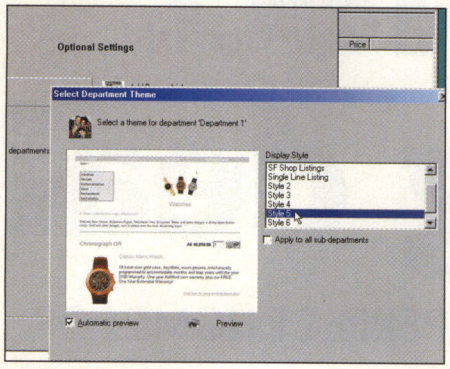
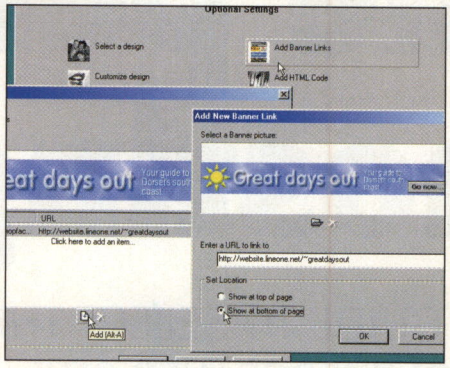


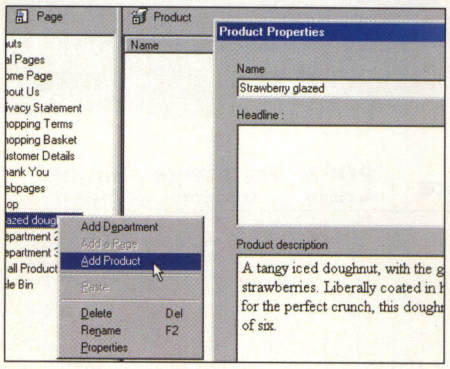
13 The layout

Click on 'Select a Design' to pick a layout for the product list in that department. Again, as with the overall template design, you are at liberty to adjust the text, colour and background of the page. Click on 'Customise Design' to do this.



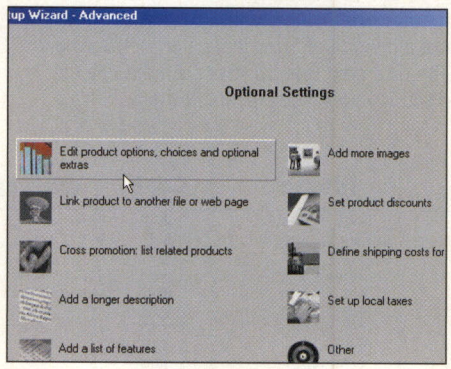
14 In-store advertising

If your shop has its own banner advertising, or is part of an affiliate scheme, ShopFactory's Add Banner feature will be of use. In the 'Add Banner Links' section, press the 'Add' button, then select an image and enter its link URL.



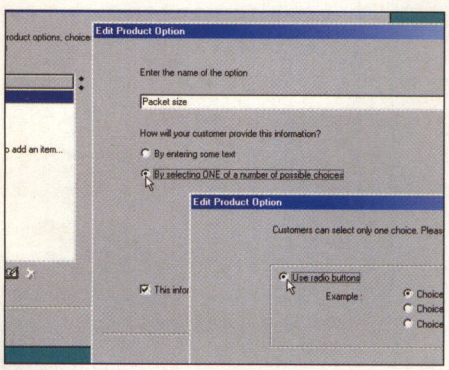
15 Fill the shelves

You're now ready to add products to your shop. Right-click on your first department and choose 'Add Product' from the pop-up menu. Enter its name, price and weight and, if applicable, catalogue number, then press 'Open' to add a photo.



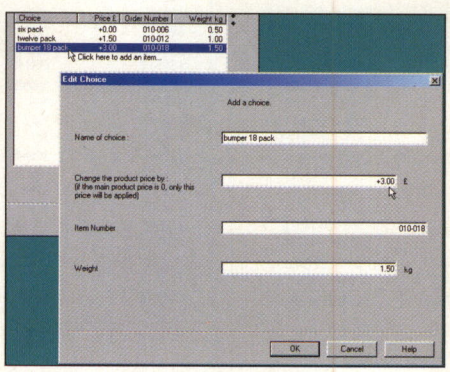
16 Different varieties

After entering a product description into the appropriate space, click on 'Next' to change its optional properties. Choices here include setting discounts and postage costs (which override the global settings). Click on 'Edit Product Options'.



17 Offering variety

If your product is available in different configurations, here's where you can set them up. Tick the 'Size' box and then double-click it. Change the name of the choice and then select how customers are to choose them.



18 Choices, choices

Enter your first choice and any additional details. Click on 'Finish', then double-click on the 'Choices' panel to add further entries. Close this dialog, then the product's 'Optional Settings' box. Repeat steps 15-18 for your other products.

Jargon buster

SSL

Netscape developed SSL, or Secure Sockets Layer, as a way of privately transmitting information over the Internet. It ensures that any confidential or sensitive data, such as credit card details, is read only by the intended recipient.

Payment provider

A company set up to handle online credit card transactions on your behalf. It processes the order for you, then credits the money to your account (less a service charge), while emailing details of the order so that you can despatch the goods.

PGP

Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) is a program used to encrypt and decrypt email messages. It also enables the person receiving the message to verify the identity of the sender (and vice versa), via the use of digital signatures. PGP is free for private use, but commercial users must licence the software.

Department

A department in ShopFactory is a way of compartmentalising your catalogue into like products. Each department appears on a separate page in the finished Web site, so it can be useful to separate your products, if only to decrease the number of items per page. In the eFlash version you are limited to three departments

Why upgrade?

ONCE YOU'VE GOT your online shop established, you might find you need to increase your stock list, or build into the site many more departments or pages. For this, you'll definitely need the professional edition, because it includes many features not included in the eFlash version. Not least of the features is the ability to add further departments, and there are no limitations on the number of products in the shop, either. You are also permitted to integrate existing product pages into the catalogue, or add any other pages into the site that have not been created within the ShopFactory software. Another advanced feature is that departments created using the professional version can each have their own page layout and Meta tags.

Pick the perfect Web hosting deal

USE THIS AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SELECT THE PERFECT HOME FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR ECOMMERCE WEB SITE

SELECTING A WEB hosting company to look after your business is just as tricky as picking the right ISP to connect you to the Internet. There's a baffling array of deals to choose from, each offering slightly different services and each charging slightly different prices. In short, there's no simple answer.

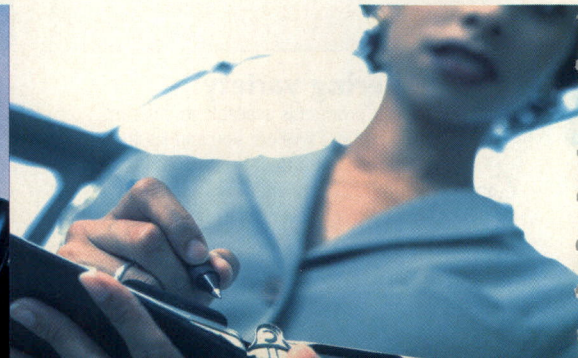
Our aim in compiling this guide is to allow you to see the different types of packages available and help you glean some idea of the costs you're likely to face. While we haven't included every single deal offered by the firms included (we could probably fill the whole of YBO with them) we have listed the products that we think are most relevant to our readers.

To use these listings effectively we recommend using the information below to pick out a handful of firms that cater for your needs. The next step is to contact each directly to discuss your requirements further. ■

Keeping up-to-date

While we try and ensure that all the information in our listings is up to date, the occasional error does creep through. If you would like to update your current details drop an email to **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the information you would like changed.

NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	POP3 Accounts	FrontPage Extensions	Phone Support
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Standard	0870 739 2020	£100.00	25Mb	3	Yes	Yes
2020Media	**www.2020media.com**	**PHP**	**0870 739 2020**	**£150.00**	**100Mb**	**3**	**No**	**Yes**
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Cold Fusion	0870 739 2020	£250.00	100Mb	3	No	Yes
2020Media	**www.2020media.com**	**Java**	**0870 739 2020**	**£300.00**	**100Mb**	**3**	**No**	**Yes**
9NetAvenue	www.9netave.uk.net	9Net ONE Plan	0800 328 9450	£239.40	25Mb	10	No	Yes
Active ISP	**www.activeisp.co.uk**	**Small Business**	**0870 7304000**	**£143.40**	**35Mb**	**10**	**Yes**	**Yes**
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	10Mb	08707 449227	£70.00	10Mb	1	No	No
AQ Limited	**www.a-q.co.uk**	**20Mb**	**08707 449227**	**£122.00**	**20Mb**	**5**	**No**	**No**
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	50Mb	08707 449227	£190.00	50Mb	5	No	No
A Web Company	**www.awebcompany.net**	**5Mb Webspace**	**020 8399 6675**	**£39.99**	**5Mb**	**1**	**No**	**No**
A Web Company	www.awebcompany.net	10Mb Webspace	020 8399 6675	£59.99	10Mb	3	No	No
A Web Company	**www.awebcompany.net**	**25Mb Webspace**	**020 8399 6675**	**£99.99**	**25Mb**	**5**	**No**	**No**
A Web Company	www.awebcompany.net	50Mb Webspace	020 8399 6675	£149.99	50MB	7	No	No
A Web Company	**www.awebcompany.net**	**100Mb Webspace**	**020 8399 6675**	**£199.99**	**100Mb**	**10**	**No**	**Yes**
A Web Company	www.awebcompany.net	250Mb Web space	020 8399 6675	£349.99	250Mb	15	No	Yes
A Web Company	**www.awebcompany.net**	**500Mb Webspace**	**020 8399 6675**	**£499.99**	**500Mb**	**20**	**No**	**Yes**
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Pro	08707 555565	£99.95	25Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	**www.businessserve.co.uk**	**Business Serve Premier**	**08707 555565**	**£199.95**	**50Mb**	**10**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Enterprise	08707 555565	£349.95	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	**www.businessserve.co.uk**	**Business Serve Enterprise NT**	**08707 555565**	**£399.95**	**100Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Light	0845 355 1000	£29.99	10Mb	10	No	No
Clara.net	**www.clara.net**	**clarahost Starter**	**0845 355 1000**	**£59.99**	**50Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**No**
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Soho	0845 355 1000	£99.00	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	**www.clara.net**	**clarahost Enterprise**	**0845 355 1000**	**£199.00**	**200Mb**	**100**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Professional	0845 355 1000	£399.00	500Mb	200	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	**www.clara.net**	**clarahost Advanced**	**0845 355 1000**	**£699.00**	**500Mb**	**200**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Compila	www.compila.com	Value	020 8289 3039	£12.00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compila	**www.compila.com**	**Commercial**	**020 8289 3039**	**£48.00**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Compila	www.compila.com	Commercial	020 8289 3039	£48.00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Don Host	**www.donhost.co.uk**	**Enterprise Plan**	**0870 7414151**	**£89.99**	**100Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Don Host	www.donhost.co.uk	Commerce Plan	0870 7414151	£179.99	250Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Bargain Host	**wwww.bargainhost.co.uk**	**Budget Host**	**None**	**£12.99**	**35Mb**	**1**	**No**	**No**
Bargain Host	wwww.bargainhost.co.uk	Budget Host Pro	None	£22.99	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Fast Hosts	**www.fasthosts.co.uk**	**Home User**	**01452 541260**	**£60.00**	**200Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Fast Hosts	www.fasthosts.co.uk	Business User	01452 541260	£199.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Freezone	**www.freezone.co.uk**	**Freezone Value**	**0845 1170366**	**£71.40**	**30Mb**	**1**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Freezone	www.freezone.co.uk	Freezone Classic Unix	0845 1170366	£119.40	50Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Freezone	**www.freezone.co.uk**	**Freezone Classic NT**	**0845 1170366**	**£119.40**	**50Mb**	**10**	**Yes**	**Yes**



Web host listings

NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	POP3 Accounts	FrontPage Extensions	Phone Support
Ghoulnet	www.ghoulnet.co.uk	Business Web	0800 0747581	£69.00	100Mb	50	Yes	No
Griffin Internet	**www.griffin.net.uk**	**Windows 2000 Webspace**	**0870 0007100**	**£199**	**150Mb**	**100**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Iarna	www.iarna.co.uk	Professional	0800 1801880	£89.00	200Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Iarna	**www.iarna.co.uk**	**Business**	**0800 1801880**	**£179.00**	**400Mb**	**40**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Inweb Networks	www.inweb.co.uk	Unix Business Package + Free DialUp	08000 612 222	£200.00 pa	100MB	One	Yes	Yes
Inweb Networks	**www.inweb.co.uk**	**NT Business Package + Free Dial Up**	**08000 612 222**	**£400 pa**	**50MB**	**One**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 30	0870 0500303	£179.88	30Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Iomart	**www.iomart.com**	**NT Core Hosting 50**	**0870 0500303**	**£239.88**	**50Mb**	**10**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 75	0870 0500303	£359.88	75Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Joshua Internet	**www.joshuainternet.com**	**Starter**	**None**	**£46.41**	**35Mb**	**10**	**Yes**	**No**
Joshua Internet	www.joshuainternet.com	Standard	None	£92.82	80Mb	25	Yes	No
Joshua Internet	**www.joshuainternet.com**	**Professional**	**None**	**£185.64**	**200Mb**	**60**	**Yes**	**No**
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Home Entry	0808 1006200	£99.95	100MB	1	No	Yes
Magic Moments	**www.magic-moments.com**	**Magic Home Pro**	**0808 1006200**	**£199.95**	**400Mb**	**100**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Business Professional	0808 1006200	£199	100Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Magic Moments	**www.magic-moments.com**	**Business eCommerce**	**0808 1006200**	**£499**	**100Mb**	**100**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Mailbox	www.mailbox.net.uk	WebStandard	0845 177345	£100	25Mb	0	Yes	Yes
Mailbox	**www.mailbox.net.uk**	**WebGold**	**0845 177345**	**£200**	**50Mb**	**15**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Mailbox	www.mailbox.net.uk	WebPro	0845 177345	£300	25Mb	25	Yes	Yes
Mailbox	**www.mailbox.net.uk**	**WebSecure**	**0845 177345**	**£250**	**25Mb**	**0**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Toe in the water	020 8426 4446	£49.00	None	None	Yes	Yes
Metronet	**www.metronet.co.uk**	**Going for a paddle**	**020 8426 4446**	**£139.00**	**10Mb**	**5**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Dive, dive, dive	020 8426 4446	£287.00	10Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Namehog	**www.namehog.net**	**Small Business**	**0870 9059444**	**£42.00**	**100Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Namehog	www.namehog.net	Business Pro	0870 9059444	£60.00	200Mb	25	Yes	Yes
NetBenefit	**www.netbenefit.com**	**Shared Hosting Package**	**0800 0724696**	**£180.00**	**100Mb**	**None**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	EASYwebs	0800 2987214	£125.00	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	**www.inetc.net**	**Gold**	**0800 2987214**	**£250.00**	**30Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Starter	0800 0283639	£131.40	20Mb	1	Yes	No
NetNation	**www.netnation.co.uk**	**Pro**	**0800 0283639**	**£191.40**	**150Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**No**
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Power	0800 0283639	£419.40	300Mb	40	Yes	No
Netway	**www.netway.co.uk**	**Small to medium business**	**07020 939842**	**£199.00**	**20Mb**	**1**	**Yes**	**Yes**
OrbitalNet	www.orbital.net	Pack 2	0800 3891397	£129.00	50Mb	5	Yes	Yes
OrbitalNet	**www.orbital.net**	**Pack 3**	**0800 3891397**	**£249.00**	**50Mb**	**5**	**Yes**	**Yes**
OrbitalNet	www.orbital.net	Pack 4	0800 3891397	£299.00	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes
OrbitalNet	**www.orbital.net**	**Pack 5**	**0800 3891397**	**£3.99**	**200Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**Yes**
PMHIS.Net	www.pmhis.net	Web+	None	£60.00	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	No
Positive Internet Company	**www.positive-internet.com**	**Shared Hosting**	**0800 316006**	**£250.00**	**120Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Valuespace	0870 7303170	£49.99	100Mb	50	No	Yes
Powas Park	**www.powaspark.net**	**Optisapce**	**0870 7303170**	**£99.99**	**IGb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Commercespace	0870 7303170	£199.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Simply Names	**www.simplynames.co.uk**	**Simply Basic**	**01684 893020**	**£49.99**	**10Mb**	**0**	**No**	**No**
Simply Names	www.simplynames.co.uk	Simply Soho	01684 893020	£69.99	50Mb	1	Yes	No
Simply Names	**www.simplynames.co.uk**	**Simply Enterprise**	**01684 893020**	**£99.99**	**100Mb**	**10**	**Yes**	**No**
Simply Names	www.simplynames.co.uk	Simply Corporate	01684 893020	£149.99	200Mb	20	Yes	No
Simply Names	**www.simplynames.co.uk**	**Simply Ecom**	**01684 893020**	**£249.99**	**500Mb**	**50**	**Yes**	**No**
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Entry	01707 885800	£99.99	40Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	**www.sharedknowledge.net**	**Personal**	**01707 885800**	**£99.99**	**80Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**No**
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Small Business	01707 885800	£249.99	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	**www.sharedknowledge.net**	**Net Business**	**01707 885800**	**£399.99**	**400Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Executive	01707 885800	£499.99	400Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	**www.sharedknowledge.net**	**Executive E-Commerce**	**01707 885800**	**£799.99**	**600Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo Lite 24/7	N/A	£180	25Mb	25	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	**www.sonnet.co.uk**	**Dial4Business**	**N/A**	**£120**	**50Mb**	**25**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo Daytime	N/A	£180	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	**www.sonnet.co.uk**	**Solo 24/7**	**N/A**	**£300**	**50Mb**	**50**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Symphony	N/A	£660	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Square Internet	**www.squareinternet.co.uk**	**Home Value Package**	**None**	**£13.99**	**35Mb**	**1**	**No**	**No**
Square Internet	www.squareinternet.co.uk	Home Value Plus	None	£22.50	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Square Internet	**www.squareinternet.co.uk**	**Business Host Package**	**None**	**£49.99**	**100Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**No**
Square Internet	www.squareinternet.co.uk	Business Host Plus Package	None	£99.99	250Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Strongnet	**www.strongnet.co.uk**	**Various**	**01703 866006**	**Various**	**50Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Unlimited**	**No**
Supanames	www.supanames.co.uk	Value Host	0870 1257678	£13.99	35Mb	1	No	Yes
Supanames	**www.supanames.co.uk**	**Value Host Pro**	**0870 1257678**	**£23.99**	**35Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	5 megs	0845 082 0696	£55.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	**www.ukhosting.co.uk**	**10 megs**	**0845 082 0696**	**£95.00**	**20Mb**	**1**	**Yes**	**Yes**
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	20 megs	0845 082 0696	£125.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Verio	**www.verio.co.uk**	**Starter**	**020 7767 3700**	**£109.45**	**10Mb**	**2**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Designer	020 7767 3700	£197.45	50Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Verio	**www.verio.co.uk**	**Business**	**020 7767 3700**	**£274.45**	**125Mb**	**40**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Commerce	020 7767 3700	£384.45	175Mb	60	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	**www.webfusion.co.uk**	**Home Entry**	**0115 917 0000**	**£99.95**	**100Mb**	**1**	**No**	**Yes**
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	Home Professional	0115 917 0000	£199.95	400Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	**www.webfusion.co.uk**	**Web Fusion Business Pro**	**0115 917 0000**	**£199.00**	**100Mb**	**100**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	Business E-Commerce	0115 917 0000	£499.00	100Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	**www.webtapestry.co.uk**	**Basic Hosting**	**0800 0151718**	**£35.00**	**10Mb**	**1**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Economy Hosting	0800 0151718	£50.00	25Mb	2	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	**www.webtapestry.co.uk**	**Senior Hostings**	**0800 0151718**	**£125.00**	**50Mb**	**5**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Executive Hostings	0800 0151718	£200.00	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Xsession	**www.xsession.com**	**Personal Hosting**	**01784 460896**	**£39.00**	**25Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**No**
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Business Hosting	01784 460896	£94.00	200Mb	100	Yes	No
Xsession	**www.xsession.com**	**Premium Hosting**	**01784 460896**	**£350.00**	**500Mb**	**350**	**Yes**	**No**
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 1	0845 4584200	£50.00	5Mb	0	No	No
Zebra Hosts.net	**www.zebrahosts.net**	**Package 2**	**0845 4584200**	**£100.00**	**25Mb**	**0**	**Yes**	**No**
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 3	0845 4584200	£175.00	50Mb	1	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	**www.zebrahosts.net**	**Package 4**	**0845 4584200**	**£500.00**	**100Mb**	**5**	**Yes**	**Yes**
ZyWeb Business	www.zyweb.com	ZyWeb Business	01392 209500	£210.00	30Mb	10	No	No

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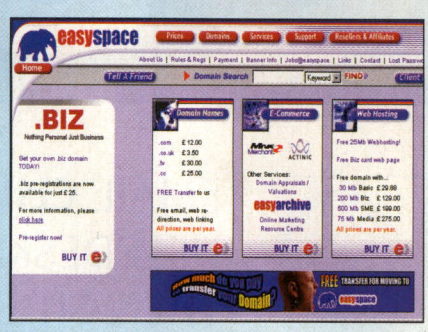

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Q&A

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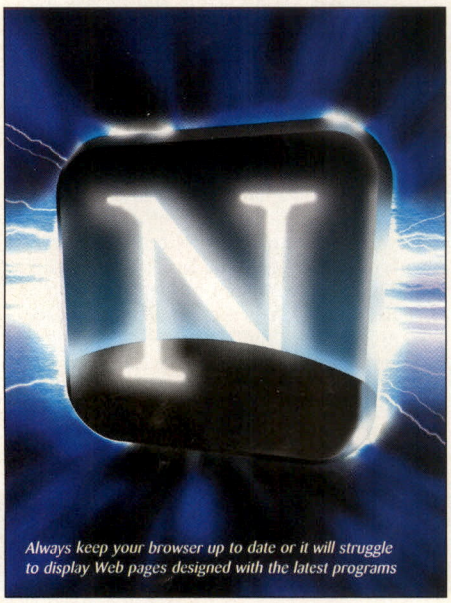


Always keep your browser up to date or it will struggle to display Web pages designed with the latest programs

Upgrading Netscape

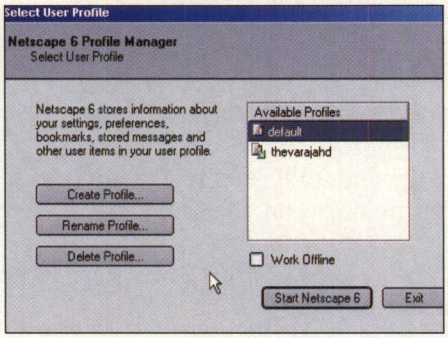
Q I use Netscape 4.7 at home and at work on two separate PCs. The version at home has started crashing every time I try to open it. The error message is:

NETSCAPE caused an invalid page fault in module NETSCAPE.EXE at 0177:0050dbf7.

I have an old 1998 CD with Netscape 4.5 on it, but I cannot find a copy of Netscape Communicator 4.7 anywhere. I see that Netscape 6.2 is on the cover disc that comes with your magazine. Is there any way that I can make use of it without erasing my address book and stored emails?

Robert Caldicott

A **It's easy Robert. You can install Netscape 6.2 onto your PC and transfer all of your emails and the address book automatically to the new version as long as they haven't been corrupted by whatever caused the problem with your current version of Netscape. Insert the *Practical Internet* cover CD and follow the instructions for installing Netscape 6.2. After the installation is complete and Netscape 6.2 runs for the first time, it should find your existing profile. All you have to do is select it in the profile window and you will be able to access all of your emails and bookmarks.**



When you install Netscape 6.2 and run it for the first time, it will find your existing profile created with Netscape 4.7. Just select it and click on the 'Start Netscape 6' button

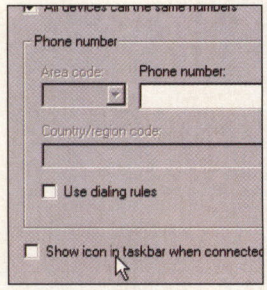
Once you have selected your profile, all of your bookmarks will be available in the new version of Netscape 6.2. And your emails, of course

Lost icon

Q I've noticed that the little icon which appears in the taskbar that indicates I am connected does not appear with my new Internet service provider. It still appears if I dial up my other account. I like to see this icon because it reminds me that I am connected to the Internet. Is there some way to make it appear with my new connection?

Lucy Merrill

A **The connection icon appears if a checkbox is selected in the Properties control panel of your new dial-up networking connection. Here's how to find it. Go to the Start button of Windows and select 'Settings', 'Network' and 'Dial-Up Connections'. When the Network and Dial-Up Connections window appears, right-click on the icon for your new Internet service provider and select the 'Properties' command. Click on the 'General' tab of the Properties control panel**



To make sure that the Connection icon shows up in the taskbar, click on this checkbox in the General tab of your service provider's Properties control panel.

and then click on the 'Show icon in taskbar when connected' checkbox so that it is selected. The next time you connect to the Internet using your new ISP account, you will see the icon appear in the task bar.

Talk about a resolution

Q I found your recent tip on altering digital photos in TIFF mode rather then JPEG very helpful. However, I am a complete novice at digital photography and would value your help with regard to resolutions and compression modes. I have a Canon Powershot P90 and it gives me the options of shooting in the following resolutions:

Large	(1856x1392 pixels)
Medium	(1024x768 pixels
Small	(640x480 pixels)

In each case there is a choice of Superfine, Fine or Normal compression – the number of images I can take increases from Superfine to Normal and from Large to Small. I view my monitor in 1024x768 resolution and most snaps I print will be 6x4 inches with the odd 10x7 inch enlargement. Could you offer any advice please?

Keith Wilson-Davis

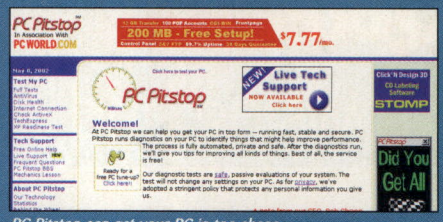
A **It depends entirely on what you want to do with the images. If you are taking pictures that are going to be used on a Web site, you can set the camera to 640x480 pixels because you will probably reduce the image dimensions anyway. For images that you are going to print as stills, you should use one of the two higher resolutions. As for compression settings; the more compression you use the lower the quality of the image. For prints you should set the compression to Normal but it depends on how sharp you want your images to be in the end. I usually go for the middle setting when it comes to compression. If I want more images, I find it best to just use a spare memory card. An extra memory card is a good investment, especially if you are going on holiday and you know there'll be no way to download the images from your camera. I have two 64Mb memory stick cards for my Sony DSC-50 camera and two 16Mb for my old Kodak DC120. At 640x480 pixels and the highest**

Top tip!

Test your Net connection

PC Pitstop (www.pcpitstop.com) can help you get your PC in top form. The site runs tests on your PC to identify areas that might help improve the overall appearance. Best of all, its' free!

Gerard Copling



PC Pitstop can get your PC in top shape

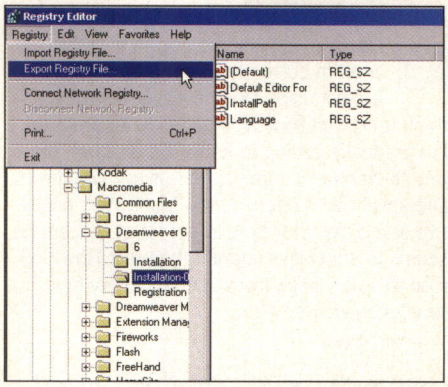
compression settings I can get around 180 images on each 16Mb card.

Registry problem

Q This is a simple question rather than a major problem. Is there any way that I can save the Registry settings and then reload them at a later date? I'm worried in case the Registry gets corrupted and programs stop working. I am using Windows 2000 Professional to run a small office system at home.

Stuart Carter

A **You can export and import the Registry settings at any time for your peace of mind so you can restore it if a problem should occur. You must remember to export a copy of the Registry every time you make a change to the setup of your PC such as installing software, removing software or adding or removing hardware components that use drivers. If you install a program and then import a version of the registry made before you installed it, the program will refuse to run and throw an error message in your face. To export the Registry settings, go to the 'Start' menu and select the 'Run' command, type 'regedit' in the text field and then hit the 'OK' button. When the Registry Editor opens, go to the Registry menu and select the 'Export Registry File' command and save the file in a safe place. To import, do exactly the same and select the 'Import Registry File' command.**



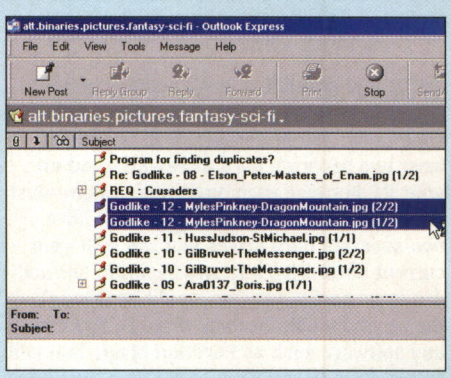
You can import and export the Registry settings as many times as you wish, but be careful you don't disable installed software or hardware when importing

How to combine split images

Q Hi Clive. I'm a keen science fiction and fantasy fan and I have found some great images in Usenet newsgroups. The only problem I have found is that many of the images have been uploaded to the newsgroups in two parts or more. I select the first part and hope the rest will download but I either get part of an image or a screen full of gibberish. It must be possible to download or view the complete images in Outlook Express 6 but this baffles me. Can you help me?

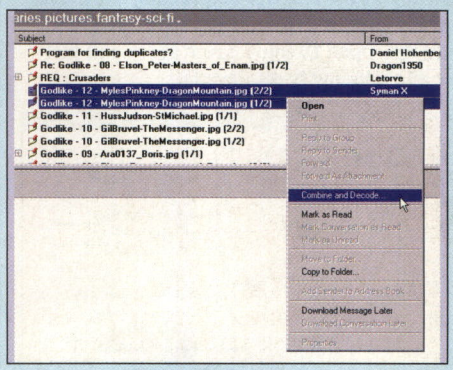
Sally Smith

A **It is possible to do this in Outlook Express 6 but it's not immediately obvious what you have to do. Follow these steps and you'll be downloading images with the best of them.**



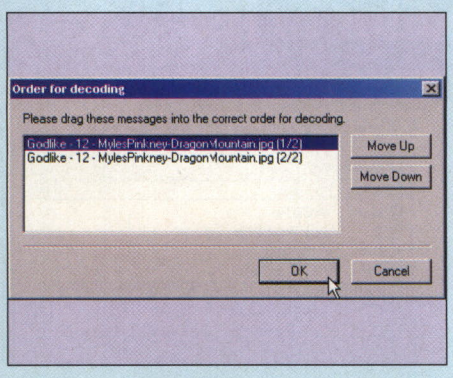
1 Select your segments

Go to the newsgroup that contains the image files you want to download. When you are in the right area, use the 'Shift' and/or the 'Control' key (Ctrl) in conjunction with the mouse to select all of the parts of the image file.



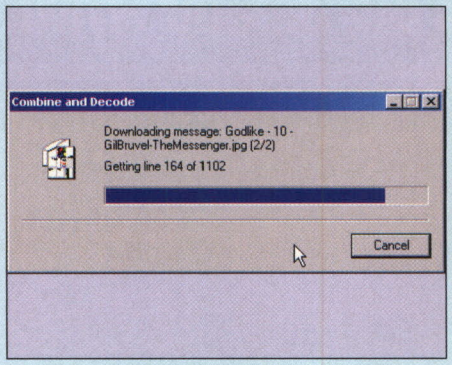
2 Use the mouse, Luke

Once you have selected all of the segments of the file, right-click on the selection and a pop-up contextual menu will appear. In the menu, select the 'Combine and Decode' command.



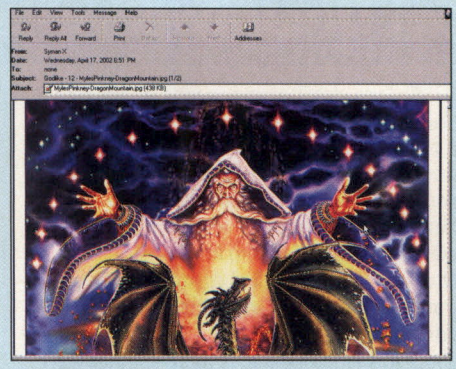
3 Sort the files

A dialog box opens that enables you to sort the segments of the file into the correct order for decoding. In many cases it does this automatically; if a segment is in the wrong position select it and use the 'Move Up' and 'Move Down' buttons.



4 Wait a while...

After sorting the segments into the correct order, click on the 'OK' button. You will now have to wait for a while for the image to combine and decode depending on the number of segments and their size.



5 As if by magic...

When the segments have finished combining and decoding, Outlook Express 6 opens a new window and displays the entire image within it. You can now right-click on the image and save it in the usual way.

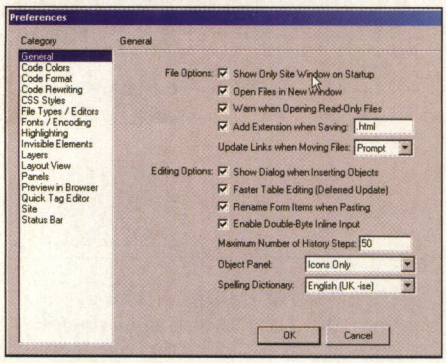
Q&A
Browsing and email

→ Unwanted window

Q I'm studying graphic design at University. and I'm currently working on a Web project using Dreamweaver 4, which I think is an excellent Web page layout program. I'm gradually getting to know the program but one thing always annoys me – every time I run Dreamweaver it opens a new blank Web page. I've asked my tutor how to get rid of this but he seems to know less about it than me. How do I stop this new page from opening every time I run Dreamweaver 4?

Adrian Williams

A **This is a Preferences setting that is quickly remedied. Open Dreamweaver 4 (and close the blank, new Web page) and go to the 'Edit' menu and select 'Preferences'. Click on the 'General' heading in the list on the left. In the General window, select the checkbox labelled 'Show Only Site Window on Startup' in the File Options section. Now click on 'OK' and exit Dreamweaver to save the settings. Open Dreamweaver again and just the site window is displayed.**

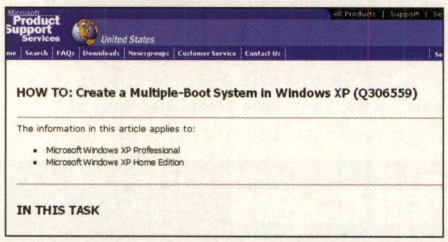


If you select the right options, just the site window is opened when you launch Dreamweaver 4

It takes two

Q I want to upgrade to Windows XP Home Edition from Windows ME but I am worried that some of my existing software won't run under Windows XP. It was bad enough upgrading from Windows 98 to Windows ME. Someone has told me that it's possible to have more than one operating system running on a PC. Is this true, and if so, how do I go about setting it up?

Mark Gibson

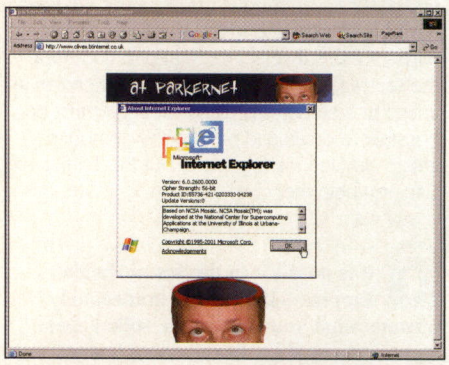


If you want to find out how to create a dual boot system with Windows XP, Microsoft has full details on its Web site at http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;q306559

A **It is possible and it's actually quite easy to do but there are one or two conditions. You preferably need to have at least two separate hard drives installed on your PC because each operating system must boot from its own drive. If you don't have two separate hard drives you can split your current hard drive into two separate 'virtual' drives or partitions. One would be drive C, the second would become drive D. You can buy software such as Partition Magic that will split a drive in this way. To set up a dual boot system with Windows ME and Windows XP Home Edition you must have Windows ME installed first. You can't add Windows ME to a PC with Windows XP installed, but you can add Windows XP to a Windows ME machine. In Windows ME run the setup program on the Windows XP CD-ROM. During the installation you are asked whether you want to upgrade or perform a separate installation, the second option is the one you use to create a dual boot system. You are also asked if you want to choose the drive where you want to install Windows XP. Choose 'Yes' and select drive D when prompted during the installation process. Basically that's it, although I could go into a lot more detail. Microsoft has full details of creating a dual boot system with Windows XP at http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;q306559.**

Badly drawn boy

Q I'm using Internet Explorer 4 on my PC with Windows 98 SE and I've had a few problems viewing some Web sites. It seems that all of the content is on the page but some Web sites are either very badly designed or there is something seriously wrong with my Web browser. Headings seem to be either invisible, smaller than the body text or all in lower case,



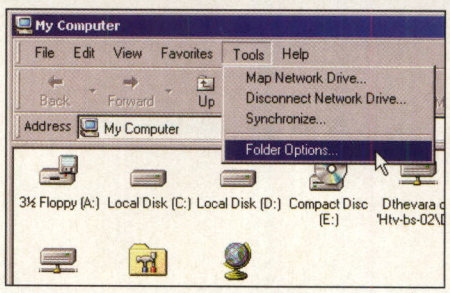
If pages aren't displaying properly, you probably need to upgrade your Web browser. You know it makes sense...

Set Dreamweaver as the default HTML editor in IE6

Q I'm using Dreamweaver 4 to edit files for a Web site project, but I have a bit of a problem. The default HTML editor drop-down menu in the IE6 Internet Options control panel only gives me the choice of Microsoft Wordpad or Notepad to set as the default editor. It doesn't seem to know that Dreamweaver is installed on my PC. I've seen a solution in another magazine that involves editing the registry, but I'm a little nervous about this kind of thing. Is there another way?

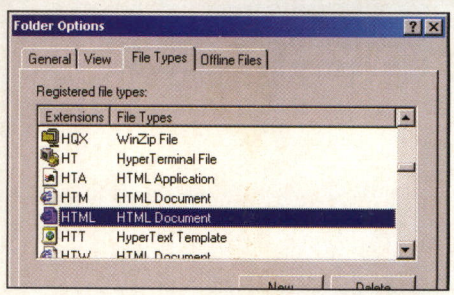
Richard Lloyd

A **There is an easier way to remedy this problem and you don't need to go anywhere near the Registry Editor to do so. Follow these steps...**



1 Use the options

You need to access the Folder Options control panel to make the changes required. Go to the 'My Computer' icon on the desktop and double-click on it, now select the 'Folder Options' command in the 'Tools' menu.



2 Select HTML

In Folder Options, click 'File Types'. Scroll down the list of file types and find HTML. Select it then click on 'Advanced'. The Edit File Type panel opens. Now click the 'Edit' listing in the 'Actions' window to select it, then click 'Edit'.

and bits of the page seem to have been laid out at random and seem to be badly drawn. I also use Netscape Communicator 4.8, and while the pages look better they still don't display correctly. Any ideas?

Des Jenkins

A **The problem here is relatively simple, both the Web browsers you are using are sadly out of date and you are probably trying to view pages that contain CSS styles, DHTML and other more advanced features. Internet Explorer 5 was released in 1998 and has gone through several version upgrades and is now up to Internet Explorer 6. Netscape is up to version 6.2 of its Web browser so you can see that you have some catching up to do. Luckily, the latest versions of both Internet Explorer 6 and Netscape 6 can be installed from the *Practical Internet* cover CD. It always pays to keep up-to-date with Web browsers.**

Can I run IE6?

Q I want to upgrade to IE6 from the Practical Internet cover CD. The problem is that I have a system that has very little free hard disk space available, I need to know what additional space will be used when installing on top of Internet Explorer 5.5.

Stephen Garner

The amount of disk space required depends on your current operating system; it varies between 8.7Mb for Windows ME to 12.7Mb for Windows NT4. You can find full details of the system requirements for Internet Explorer 6 from the Microsoft Web site at http://microsoft.com/windows/ie/evaluation/sysreqs/default.asp.

Proxy settings in RealOne Player

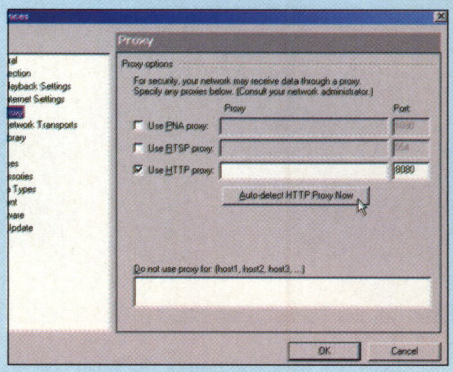
Q I'm trying to use the new RealOne player to watch streaming video clips from the Web at my office, but I'm having a problem with the settings. I know that I need to set up proxy settings to access the Web through the network but I'm not sure how to find them. What do I do?

Geoff Harding

A **Assuming that your company's firewall will allow RealVideo content through, it's a simple matter of using the RealOne preferences to automatically detect the settings for the browser installed on your PC. Follow these steps to find out how.**

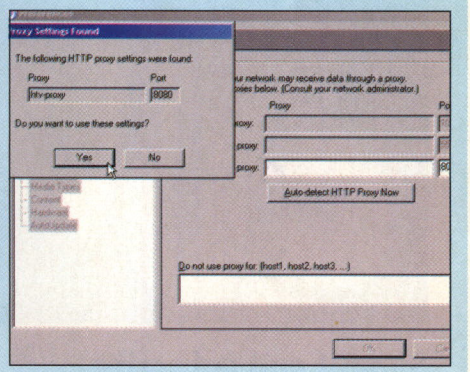
1 Open the Preferences

The RealOne Player is stuffed with settings ranging from enabling you to record from a microphone to changing the look by adding a new skin. Go to the 'Tools' menu and select the 'Preferences' command.



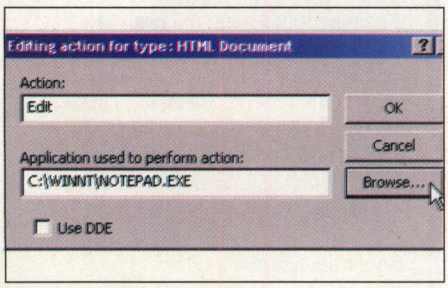
2 Connection settings

In the Preferences control panel, find the Connection entry in the window on the left and click the '+' symbol. Click on the Proxy entry, then select the 'Use HTTP proxy:' checkbox. Now click the 'Auto-detect HTTP Proxy Now' button.



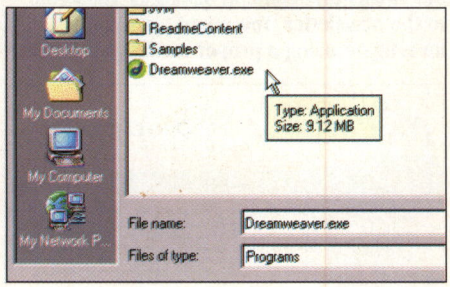
3 Automated

The RealOne Player will now detect the proxy settings used by your Web browser. In the dialog box, click on the 'Yes' button to use the settings. Now click on the 'OK' button to save the settings in RealOne Player.



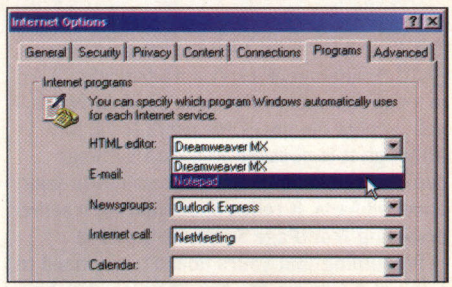
3 Editing actions

Another dialog box opens with a couple of entries. The Action field explains the command you are editing, the second field is where you define the program to edit HTML files. Click on the 'Browse' button to search for Dreamweaver.



4 File selector

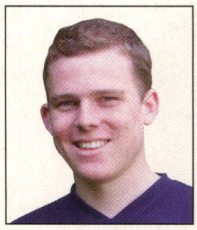
Use the Windows file selector to browse to Dreamweaver, select '**Dreamweaver.exe**' and click 'Open'. You'll return to the Editing action dialog box. Check it appears in the 'Application used to perform action:' field then click 'OK'.



5 Select Dreamweaver

Open the 'Internet Options' control panel from the 'Tools' menu of IE6. Click the 'Programs' tab and click the 'HTML editor' drop-down menu and select 'Dreamweaver'. Job done without going near the Registry Editor.

Q&A
Web site building



JAMES SEABRIGHT ANSWERS YOUR WEB SITE BUILDING QUERIES. EMAIL HIM ON JAMES@PARAGON.CO.UK

Submit and subscribe

Q I run a Web site about Liverpool FC (www.LiverpoolFC2002.cjb.net) and I am thinking of putting a newsletter together that will be emailed to visitors. I can't afford fancy software, but would like to put a text box with a Submit' button on the Web page so visitors can submit their email address to subscribe to the newsletter. I am using FrontPage 2000 and I have managed to get the text box on the page, although nothing happens when the 'Submit' button is clicked.

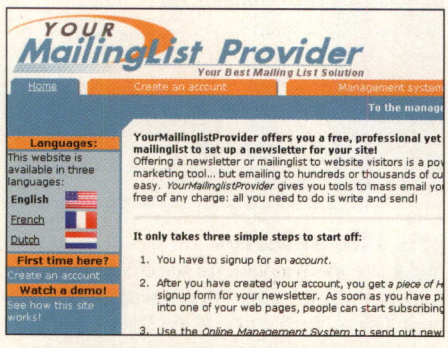
Chris Barton

A **As with most Web design packages, FrontPage doesn't automatically manage the submission side of fill-in forms, it just creates the boxes for users to fill in. Although it is possible to have FrontPage automatically send form information to your email address, it relies upon your Web server providing FrontPage Server Extensions.**

Presuming that yours doesn't, you need to sort out a way for the details entered to be handled. If your Web host provides a 'formmail' script this could be as simple as entering a few configuration details into the form. Alternatively, can use a free form handling service like www.response-o-matic.com or www.responders.com. Both of these will help you create the form you want and then provide HTML code to paste directly into FrontPage (see the panel on page 107 about interactive services for more on Responders.com).

With the code in place, you can then customise the form by the usual method of right-clicking on the form or any individual element within the form, and selecting 'Form Properties' or 'Form Field Properties' from the pop-up menu that appears.

One remaining issue is how you handle all the emails that come in asking to subscribe to the newsletter. You might want to investigate using a proper mailing list service if demand is high – www.yourmailinglistprovider.com is one good free service. If you decide not to use that type of approach, at least consider setting up a separate email address to handle newsletter requests.



Start a newsletter or site update email list completely free of charge by visiting www.yourmailinglistprovider.com

Seeking search solution

Q Can you recommend a good software package for building search pages? I just need something simple to index normal HTML pages. My Web host allows me to run scripts on the server if required.

Fred Zimmerman

A **There are certainly software solutions for making search pages for a Web site, although they tend to be expensive and cumbersome, at least when compared to the free, fast and flexible might of the Atomz search service at www.atomz.com/search/trial_account.htm. This is configured entirely via the Web and allows your users to swiftly search your site by typing their query into the search box; code for which is provided by Atomz. They will then be shown a results page, which can be customised with your own site design features – the only stipulation being that you must retain the Atomz logo on the page**

Readers' tips

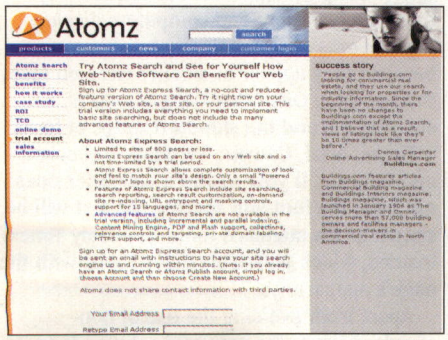
Hovering links

I've always thought a good way to present links without filling a Web page with unsightly underlining is to make them appear in a different colour, with the line underneath only appearing when the mouse pointer hovers over the link. I thought other readers might like to do this on their site, so here's the code they need to use. It just needs to be placed in the <head> section of the page in question in order to make all the links on that page behave the same way. To produce the inverse effect, ie to make the underlining disappear when the pointer hovers, simply swap around the values of the 'text-decoration' property.

Celia Lorry

```
<style type="text/css">
<!- -
A                    { color: blue; text-
decoration: none }
A:hover    { text-decoration: underline }
- ->
</style>
```

somewhere. Thankfully there are no advertising banners at all to worry about. This all comes free for personal sites up to 500 pages in size. A similar service is also available from www.freefind.com; you can find a tutorial covering how to install that Web service on page 64 of Practical Internet issue 64. Both Atomz and Freefind can handle data formats other than HTML, so they have the potential to grow with your site.



Help your visitors to find what they're looking for by using www.atomz.com to install a search engine on your site

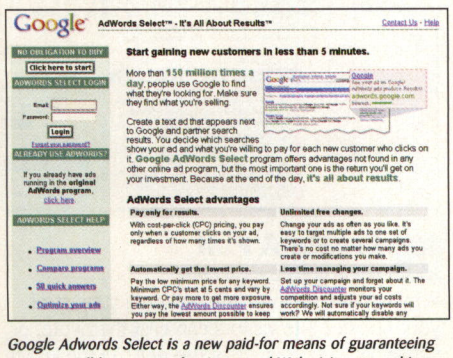
Seeking search success

Q I have created a Web site for a local business and am now trying to register it with every search engine I can find, but it doesn't seem to have generated many visits. When I try searching for relevant keywords on the main search engines my site does not appear in the listings. I realise it can take time for the site to be added but nothing I try seems to work. Help!

Thelma Wilson

A **It is very difficult to push your site to a high ranking in key search engines or online directories, especially as some require you to pay for the privilege of being listed or given a good ranking. This is a very complicated subject and not one that can be covered in the space available here. You'd be well advised to refer back to issue 51's article on this very subject; you can download a copy of the text from my personal Web site at www.jamesseabright.com. You may also want to take a look at the excellent tutorials online at www.selfpromotion.com.**

If you have a budget for your search engine promotion, I'd advise spending most of it on Google's new AdWords Select program at http://adwords.google.com/select. This will place your site's details in a prime position on results pages for the keywords you specify, and you only pay Google if the visitor clicks on your link. This makes the service much more results-based than the original AdWords program, which still exists and charges users for each time their advert appears.



Google Adwords Select is a new paid-for means of guaranteeing your site will be promoted to interested Web visitors searching for relevant keywords

My first site

Q I became interested in Web site building as my children are driving me mad to set up Web sites for them – they both want Web sites in order to help promote their musical interests. I am keen to help, but frankly don't have clue where to start! Could you please advise me on the best way to get started? I want to do a good job for them and am prepared to spend money in order to get the required results.

As far as I can see, the cost will depend on the expected content. They both want interesting graphics, navigation buttons, still photos, video, and sound as well as links to other sites.

I hope this is enough to give you a clue as to site size; hopefully it will also give you an insight into the software I need to carry out the task. I'm reluctant to spend a small fortune, but please advise.

John Bartram

A **As you don't have any experience of Web design, I'm afraid there's a steep learning curve ahead of you, John. That's not to say you are embarking on an impossible task – just one which will take a good deal of time. The multimedia extravaganza that has been ordered by your children will require the use of a range of software tools to convert audio and video into Web-friendly formats and then combine everything together into a site.**

The obvious recommendation is that you buy the new Macromedia Studio MX software, which comes with the Dreamweaver Web editing software and the Flash multimedia authoring package. Alternatively, you could find a Web editing package that you are happy working with and then turn to third party software to handle the multimedia aspects of the site. For instance, Microsoft FrontPage could be combined with the multimedia talents of Sony's Screenblast multimedia community at www.screenblast.com.

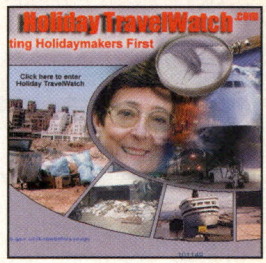
→

Readers' sites

Share your site with us – send the URL to **james@paragon.co.uk**

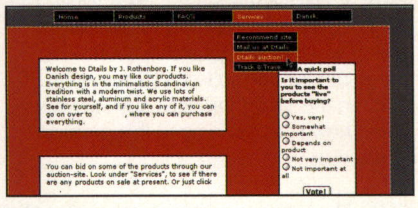
Holiday Travelwatch

URL: www.holidaytravelwatch.com
Creator: Brenda Wall
Comment: This is a perfect site for anyone who's had a nightmare holiday or is keen to avoid one. It would be a good idea to take a note of this URL with you next time you go on holiday just in case things go horribly wrong, as there's plenty of advice about how to sort things out. Watch out *Watchdog*, Brenda's site could make you the weakest link…



Focus on Malaysia

URL: http://pgoh.free.fr
Creator: Goh Peng-Joo
Comment: This site is a useful resource for anyone interested in Malaysia, and especially for those planning a visit there. It combines a range of home-grown advice and information pages with links to the best content on offer elsewhere.

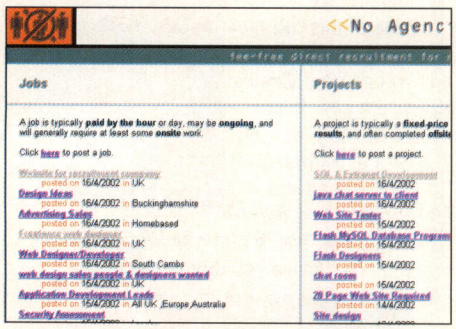


Details

URL: www.rothenborg.com
Creator: Jens Rothenborg
Comment: Jens' site promotes his minimalist design products. Appropriately enough, the Web pages are designed in the same style, making this site a pleasurably speedy navigational experience. One to look at if you've always wondered how less really can be more…

In addition to consulting the reviews and tutorials in this magazine, your best bet would be to buy our sister magazine, *Web Pages Made Easy*, which contains tutorials on Web building and recommendations on which software to buy. Do also try and find time to play around with the software and get used to making pages before you actually put anything online.

If this is all beginning to sound like too much hard work, you could try posting a request at www.noagenciesplease.com for a Web designer who is prepared to do the whole thing for you!



Recruit yourself a new media freelancer at www.noagenciesplease.com

Failing to Excel

Q I have set up a Web site for a Fantasy Football League that has a number of tables of statistics. Most of the pages are generated from an Excel spreadsheet, using the 'Save as Web page' facility within Excel 2002.

This all works quite well except that I get a persistent problem with lines of the spreadsheet overlapping on the Web page, and sometimes cell borders do not appear. This seems to vary between browsers. Sometimes hitting the 'Refresh' button on the browser can repair it. Have you come across this before and can you help me to solve this please?

Jeff Keen

A **The main problem you describe is not specific to Excel. Some browsers have problems accurately displaying complicated tables, which is the method used in most examples of spreadsheet conversions. Internet Explorer often initially displays a table properly, but then has problems when the user scrolls the page. There is no way that this can be reliably avoided, although it will help to keep tables as small as possible and to manually remove the surplus HTML code that is often generated by automatic Web page creators. When Web browser makers become aware of these problems, new versions of their software often included improvements to correct them, and so you may find the problem solves itself in due course.**

As for the trouble with invisible cell borders – that's more easily solved. Excel will only transfer solid line borders into the Web page, so make sure you've not using a special pattern for your border. Also check that the borders have been applied to the cells you are exporting rather than those outside of the Web page export range. You can avoid this problem by reapplying the borders from cells within the range that is being exported to the Web. If the problem persists, just alter the table borders manually in your normal Web page editing package.

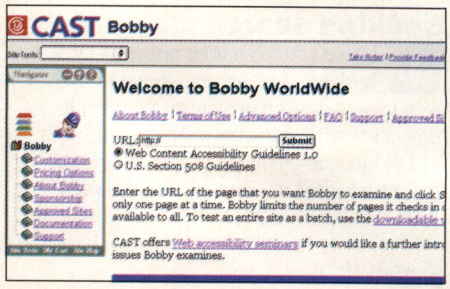
Web design for the masses

Q My Web site looks great on my computer. But when I load it on a friend's machine, all the fonts are too big, and this makes the layout go all wrong. How can I make sure that it looks like it should look on everyone's computers?

Suli Beck

A **This is a common problem with Web design, because of the various ways that Web browsers and computers display pages. Fonts are particularly troublesome, because they appear at smaller sizes on Macs than on PCs. One other danger area is straying beyond the standard range of fonts – Times, Arial, Courier, Verdana, Trebuchet, and Georgia. If your visitor's computer does not have the font you specify, the text will be shown in the standard fonts (probably Times) instead, which invariably *plays havoc* with the page's appearance.**

Apart from avoiding the use of non-standard fonts, the only real solution is to convert them into graphics. This will



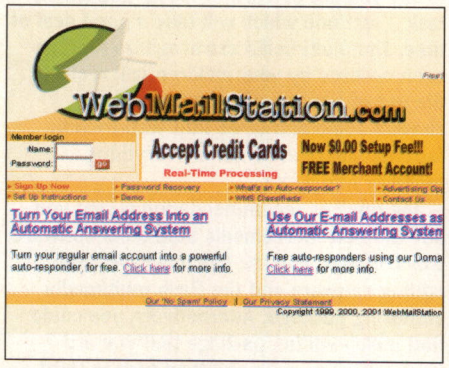
Find out how your site fares in the accessibility stakes by running it past Bobby's scrutiny at www.cast.org/bobby

Introduce interesting interactivity to your site

Q My site is a bit static and I'm keen to involve visitors more proactively. This all sounds great in theory but the fact of the matter is, I haven't got a clue about programming and so I don't know where to start on this grand mission. Any suggestions about how I can get around this problem?

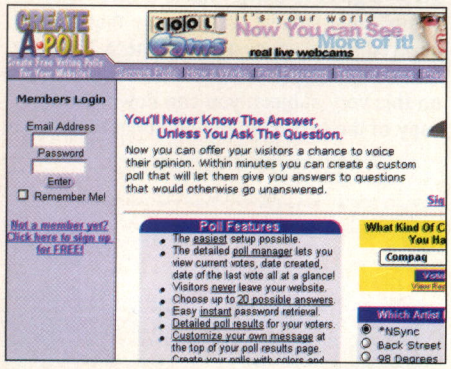
Sean Wilde

A **There are lots of Web resources that allow you to provide bolt-on interactivity to your site without knowing anything about programming. Most of these are free of charge, operating from ad revenue generated by banners. A lot depends on what your particular site needs in terms of interactive content – here are four recommendations to get you started. A good site with links to more free resources is www.totalwebmaster.com.**



1 Webmailstation
www.webmailstation.com

Use this site to set up an automatic email response system for your visitors. For instance, you could send a message to customers who email you to say their query will be dealt with.



2 Create A Poll
www.createapoll.com

Why not set up an online poll on a subject of your choice? Site visitors can cast their vote, or simply view the results of the poll. All the HTML you need is provided, and can be customised.

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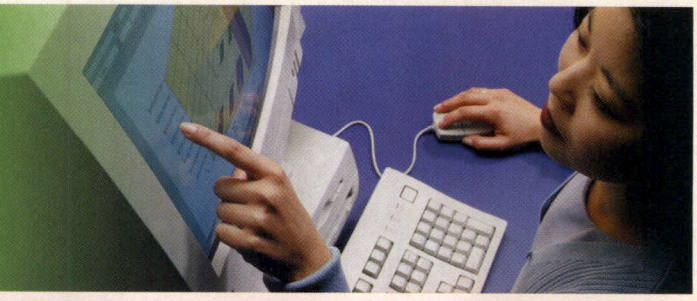

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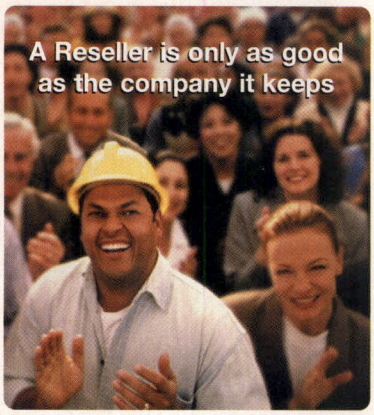

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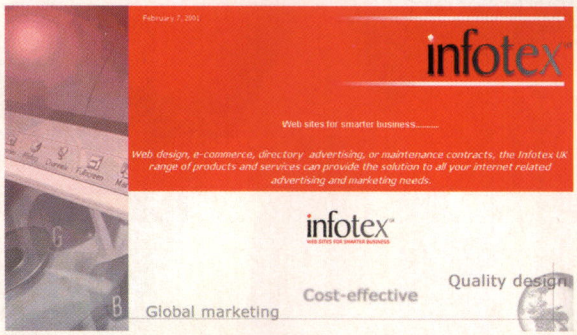

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obviously slow down the page loading process, but if you have only used the special fonts sparingly (for instance as headlines), then this won't be too noticeable. To do this, simply go into any paint or graphics package and use the text tool to enter the text you want in the relevant font, size and colour; then save the graphic as a GIF file. With this complete, insert the graphic into your Web page as you would any image and you're done. If this sounds too complicated, there are various resource sites on the Net, such as **www.cooltext.com**, that will create graphical text for you.

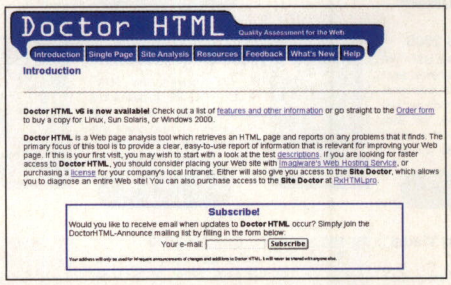
If you want to test your site for compatibility and standards compliance, try running it through the online validator at **http://validator.w3.org** and the accessibility checker at **www.cast.org/bobby**.

Mac attack

I was wondering if you could advise about how to design sites so that they appear correctly on a Mac?

Kelly Lonergan

Sites which follow the HTML specification should appear identically on all types of computer – so your first step in solving your problem is to visit the official HTML validation site at **http://validator.w3.org**. This will check your Web page for errors and advise on how to correct them – although you do need to have a fair knowledge of HTML in order to make use of the advice being given. A slightly more user-friendly approach is taken by Doctor HTML at **www.doctor-html.com/RxHTML**, which shows you a chart indicating which browsers will be troubled by your deviations from the official specification.



*Head for **www.doctor-html.com/RxHTML** if you're keen to give your Web site the once-over*

GIF gripes

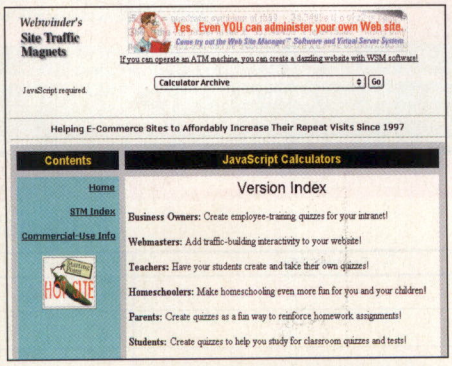
I'm having problems saving images in GIF format using Photoshop. The GIF format option is disabled whenever I go to the 'Save' dialog, but the JPEG is normally available. I thought it was possible to use either for Web images?

Samuel Jackson

If you are using a recent version of Photoshop, by far the easiest way to save a GIF is the 'Save for Web' feature.

If you want to do the GIF conversion manually, or you're using an earlier version of the software, there are a few common errors to avoid. The most common problem is when the file contains layers – this can be remedied by clicking the triangle in the top right corner of the 'Layers' palette and selecting 'Flatten Image'. To save as a GIF, the image needs converting to 'Indexed Colour' using the option in the 'Mode' section of the 'Image' menu.

Introduce interactivity, cont'd



3 Site Traffic Magnets: Quiz

www.webwinder.com/quiz

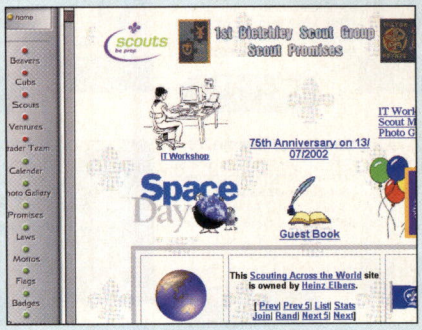
Use this service to set up a quiz that will challenge your site visitors. Why not set up an online competition and have site visitors enter by participating in the quiz?

4 Responders

www.responders.com

Providing a form on your site is a great way of encouraging visitors to submit feedback. This free service allows a range of form options to be configured, to fit your needs and site design.

Design Doctor



First Bletchley Scouts

Creator: Heinz Elbers
URL: www.1stbletchleyscouts.org.uk

THIS IS THE first Web site Heinz has created, despite his many years working with computers. There's plenty of information on the site, and it is kept up-to-date, although the Doctor has a few suggestions about how it might be better presented to visitors. The site is hosted for free at **www.escouts.org.uk** and even has its own domain name – it's good to discover that the Scouting movement has embraced technology more sophisticated than the woggle…

Navigation niggles

The main way of getting around the site is through a very large button bar that takes up the whole height of the screen on the left of the page. Although providing easy access to links, it would work better if redesigned to take up less space. Integrating the bar with the main page, rather than having it in a frame, would make the site look a lot tidier.

Lord of the Web rings

One of the most prominent elements on the front page is the Web ring panel, which provides ways to leave the site. I don't need to explain why this is bad interface design – it would be a good idea to rethink the front page design to tidy up the links and distinguish better between internal and external links.

Keep it in the family

A site's design should be consistent across all its pages so that visitors can be sure whether they're still visiting the site or have moved on elsewhere. This rule of thumb has not been followed in the guestbook pages, presumably because that is a 'bolt-on' component that hasn't been customised. This should be done, or the guestbook moved to a service like **www.signmyguestbook.com**, which allows greater customisation.

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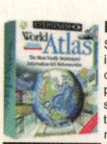

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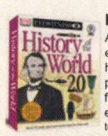

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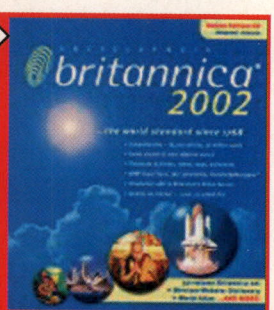

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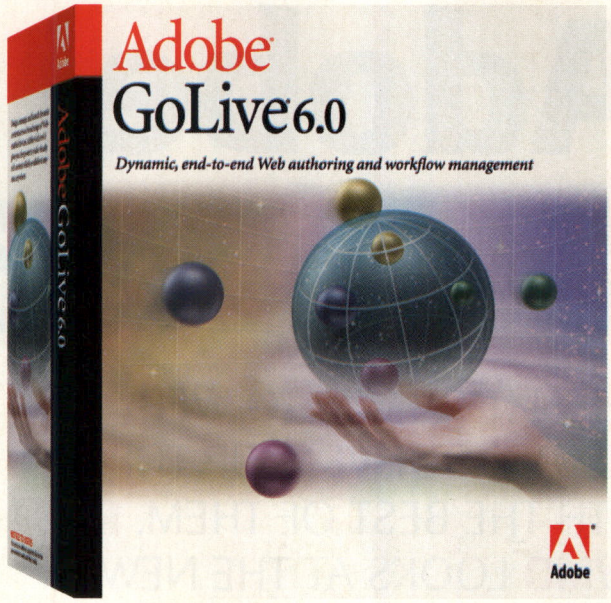
Reviews

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ALL THE LATEST NEW INTERNET HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

Adobe GoLive 6.0

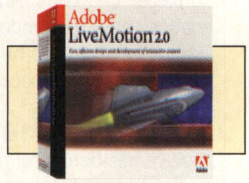
Adobe's flagship WYSIWYG Web designer has been updated and revamped, but does it still cut the mustard? We take a look on page 110



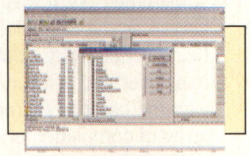
Palm m515

The latest offering from Palm brings full colour resolution and a wealth of extras, all in a compact exterior. See how it measures up on page 116

On test this issue...



LiveMotion 2.0
Produce slick interactive content with the latest version of LiveMotion 114



WS_FTP Pro 7.5
Move your files around the Web effortlessly with this pro FTP client 114

Firekeys 5.51
Protect your PC from all manner of Net nasties with this all-in-one master 115

Arena-530
This five-piece speaker set will have you rocking around your PC all night long 118

Video Blaster Webcam 5
Use the Video Blaster to plaster your mug over the Net 118

Welcome...

GOLIVE IS ONE of the big names in Web authoring and the latest version boasts a variety of tweaks to make it easier to use than ever. Check out our full review of Adobe's WYSIWYG package on page 110.

We're on something of an Adobe frenzy this month, with the rather impressive LiveMotion 2.0 also putting in an appearance. Once you've designed your site, though, you'll need to put it somewhere – so take a butcher's at the latest version of industry leader WS_FTP Pro.

Life's not all software, though, and we also regale you with our opinions on Palm's latest entry into the PDA market. This handheld wonder might just tempt you away from your PC for long enough to join the wireless revolution.

James Thornton, Staff Writer

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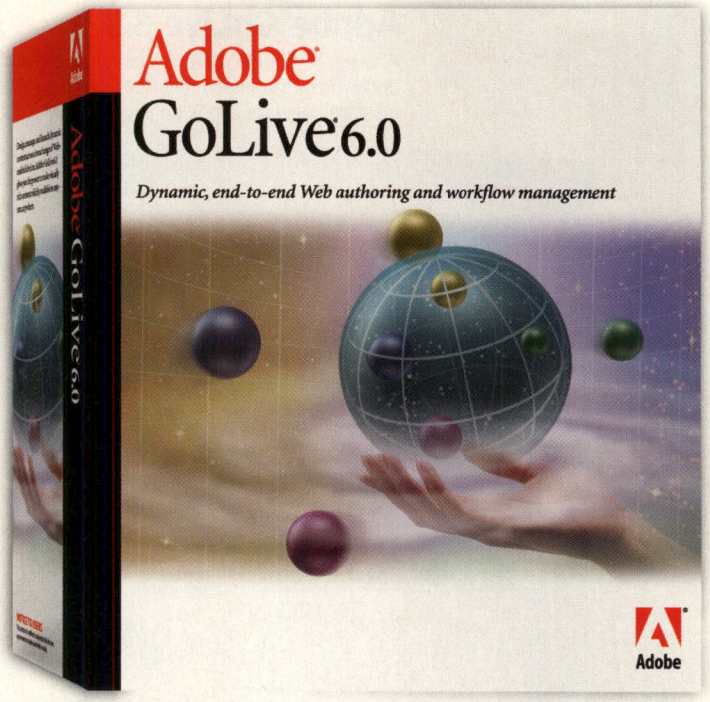
Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Adobe GoLive 6



WHEN IT COMES TO WEB DESIGN, GOLIVE IS UP THERE WITH THE BEST OF THEM. **ROB CLYMO** LOOKS AT THE NEW FEATURES IN VERSION 6.0

Building your own Web site is something many of us take for granted these days. Indeed, putting one together is far removed from the early days of the Web when page creation was the sole preserve of computer programmers. These guys would, quite literally, hand-code their work into viewable pages that could then be viewed in a browser.

While purists still tend to favour the arduous way of working, the less technically inclined among us have numerous options for avoiding this stressful route. In fact, it's now possible to create Web pages by using relatively simple programs that work on a 'drag and drop' basis. This method allows you to lay out Web pages in a similar fashion to desktop publishing. In short, that newsletter you designed to be printed can now be put together in much the same way, only this time, for the Web.

Drag and drop or What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG) programs are many and varied – whatever your budget and skill level, there is a package that will allow you to start building. Adobe's GoLive 6.0 offering has something to please everyone. And it doesn't matter how experienced you are – it can even be used by those with little or no experience.

Leader of the pack?

GoLive has been around for quite some time now. It was originally known as CyberStudio, before being acquired by Adobe, given a makeover and allowed to blend in with the company's impressive array of complimentary software, such as the revered Photoshop and LiveMotion. GoLive really is a formidable package and continues to improve with each successive incarnation. Such an impressive selection of Web page building tools doesn't come cheap, though; so while pretty much anyone can learn how to handle this software, it is ultimately pointed at the higher end of the design spectrum. Make no mistake, there are features within version 6.0 that probably even professional users might never need to touch, such is the scope of the program.

"THE LATEST INCARNATION OF GOLIVE HAS PLENTY TO OFFER WEB DESIGNERS OF ALL LEVELS"

On first inspection, GoLive 6.0 doesn't strike us as being radically different to older versions. Much of the interface is immediately familiar, and, if you've never tried it before, it might seem a little perplexing. It's certainly true to say that anyone with minimal Web knowledge will find the program a tad intimidating.

Different strokes

Building an instant site may seem like a pipe dream, but spend some time studying the fundamentals of GoLive and, once the penny drops, you will have an awesome toolkit sitting at your fingertips.

One of the greatest advantages with more advanced WYSIWYG programs is that they allow you to create your Web site in a mixture of modes. That is to say, if you're a fan of the aforementioned 'drag and drop' way of working, GoLive has everything you need. But, with just a click of your mouse, you can soon be tinkering away on the raw source code that makes up the bare bones of a Web page.

Indeed, if you have the courage, you can create a Web page from scratch without using any of the design aids on offer. Of course, the best part about having this choice of construction methods is that you can reach a compromise between the two – use the drag and drop tools to create the main elements of your pages, then tweak and fine-tune the computer code to get your site looking right.

What's up for grabs?

The latest incarnation of GoLive has plenty to offer Web designers of all levels. There are a wealth of practical aids for site building and a host of tools that help with this process, while the drag and drop feature assists in the make up of Web graphics, logos and other page elements.

There is also much to aid the transition from designing your Web graphics to building them into your site. The HTML styles palette, for example, allows precision formatting of all text elements within a site – be it simple or complex. Cascading Style Sheets, meanwhile, allow you to format entire page styles and the page template systems speeds up workflow and productivity no end.

Another invaluable new tool is the split screen option, which means that you can drag and drop page elements as you go and then tweak the background HTML code to make your pages look just how they should be.

Adobe has clearly worked very hard on behind the scenes stuff with this version, and the package definitely runs more efficiently than it did before. GoLive used to be a rather clunky program and would tend to make complex site building a bit like hard labour. However, version 6 feels extremely seamless and rolls out your pages in a very respectable, quick-step fashion.

Getting all technical

Of course, as the Web evolves, so does the demand for authoring packages which can handle all manner of emerging technologies. Fortunately, GoLive 6.0 has this covered and makes good provision for building eCommerce-enabled sites. There is also native support for common scripting languages such as ASP, JSP and PHP. And it's also possible to create dynamic page authoring in order to publish Web content. Advanced coding like XML and WML are also well catered for and you'll even find a Nokia phone emulator to preview WAP compliant sites, although this feature only works on the Windows version for some reason.

The Workgroup Server side of the package is also a revelation and offers easy management of a large corporate site by various personnel. The revised toolbar also has a built-in facility that enables individual users to both sign in and out whenever they need to refresh any content on the page. On that front, the corporate and business potential for GoLive has come on in leaps and bounds.

In layman's terms

For the less experienced, the site creation wizard is an obvious boon and removes much of the fear for first time site builders. There is also a marked improvement when it comes to site management.

GoLive has never been the most user-friendly of Web creation programs and version 6.0 still has its idiosyncrasies. Nevertheless, this is a program that can be mastered with some persistence and will deliver superb results with the right amount of effort.

Quite whether it possesses the overall class or usability of a package like Dreamweaver remains to be seen. Added to that, GoLive still has some features that prove difficult to handle and with a revised edition of Dreamweaver in the pipeline, Adobe has a long battle ahead.

The verdict

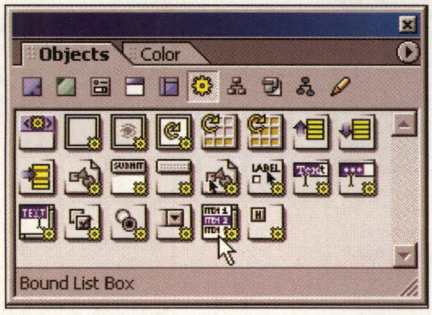
Software: Adobe GoLive 6.0
Price: £386.58
Tel: 020 8606 4001
URL: www.adobe.com

Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Value for money:	★★★★★
Overall:	★★★★★

✔ Lets you do pretty much anything

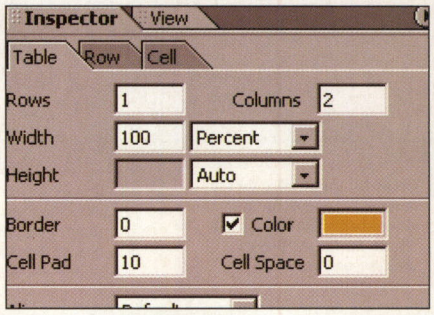
✖ Some parts of the program still baffle

Homing in on the new features in GoLive 6.0



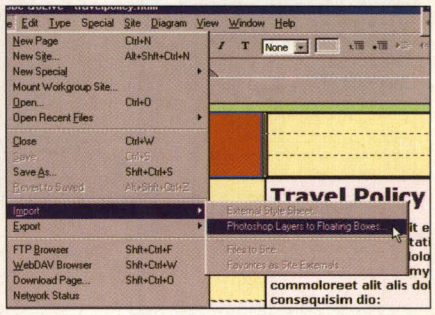
1 The GoLive interface

GoLive 6.0 sports a neatly revised interface, which allows each user to customise it. Intuitive aids like Palette stashing, Wizards and contextual menus mean that a wealth of tools and options are always at hand.



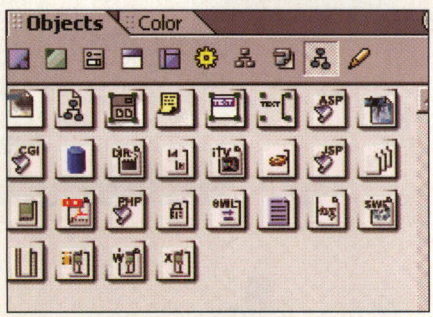
2 Table handling

Previous editions caused headaches when working with tables, However, version 6.0 sees a marked improvement in this area. The Tool Palette area now offers a zoom in/zoom out tool that allows instant navigation through nested tables.



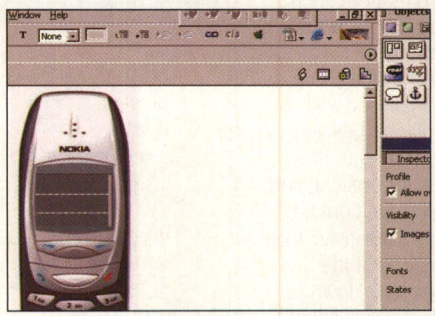
3 Integration with others

Not only does the program's interface sport familiar Adobe styling, there is also close integration with Adobe's other products. You can work seamlessly with files supplied from Photoshop, Illustrator and LiveMotion.



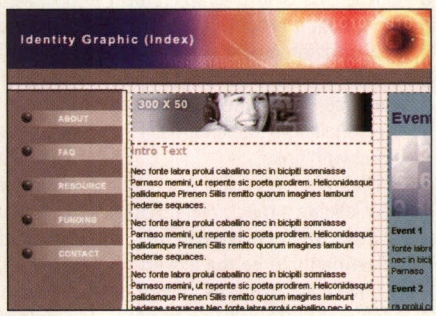
4 Careful planning

A successful site often relies on good planning. GoLive 6.0 assists in this with its Design Diagramming features. This is effectively a site plan that can be shared among workgroups or shown to clients.



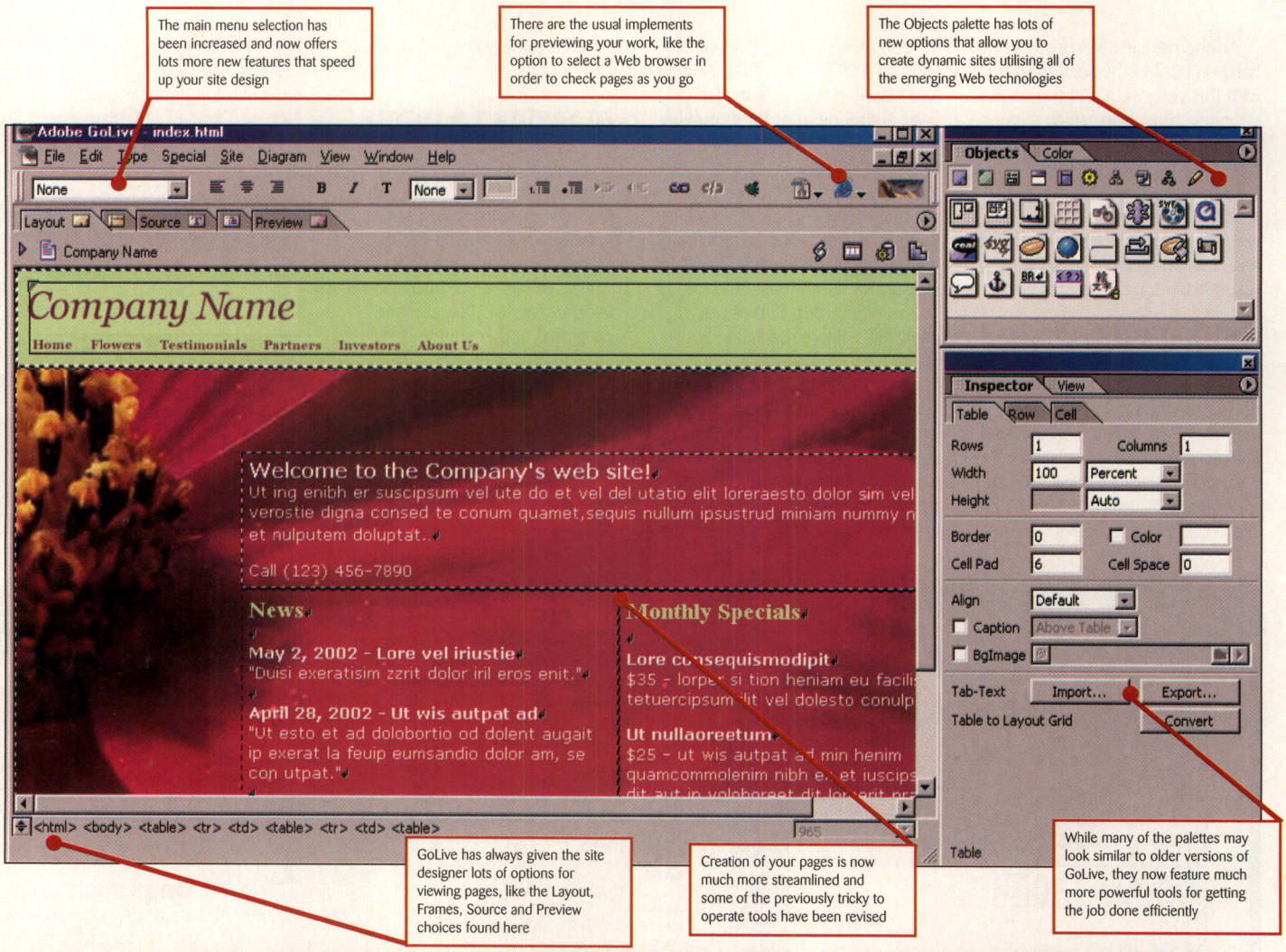
5 Wireless technologies

GoLive 6.0 tackles emerging technologies head-on with it's exciting new set of tools. Here we see how it's now possible to design a site and preview it ready for use on wireless applications like mobile phones.



6 Page templates

The template option means that common themes in your site need only be designed once, for them to be employed within new pages. When a design change is called for, you only need alter the original template.

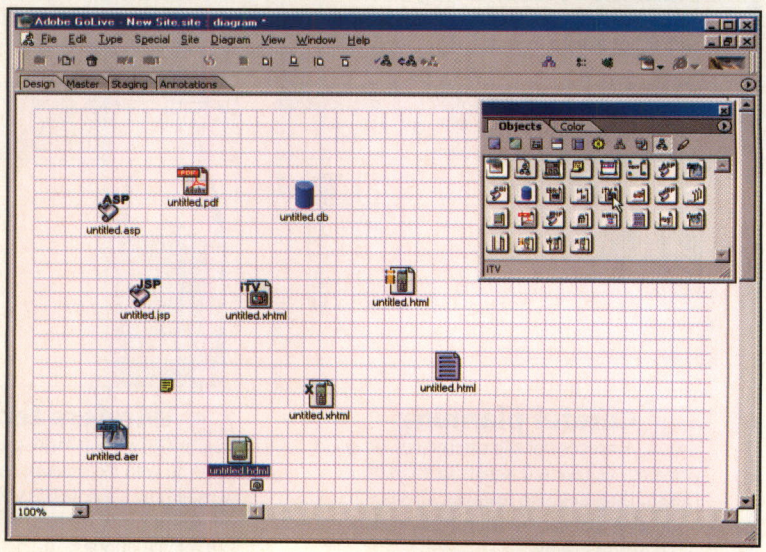


Explore the new tools available in GoLive 6.0

IF IT'S ALL in the planning then the Diagramming mode of GoLive 6.0 is sure to speed up the creation process. This clever new addition enables a site creator to plan their pages and then use the palette to add all of the specific page elements, along with links.

Diagramming gives you and your clients a much clearer view of a site and enables careful adjustments to be made with relative ease. The tool palette itself makes the job that much easier, thanks to its wide array of available components. Not only that, the process is further simplified by an easy to master drag and drop procedure that allows the designer to place items on a blank canvas, or remove them if not needed.

One of the key aspects of building Web sites successfully is making sure that you're organised and have a well planned design plan. With GoLive 6.0, the opportunities for creating and then managing site content are much more extensive than previous versions of the software. Everyone down to simple site builders will find these tools useful.

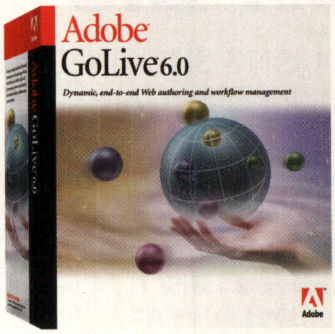


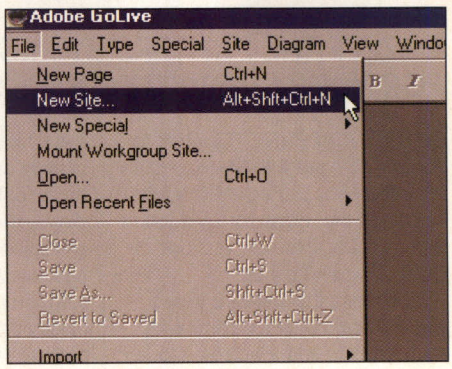
Speeding up the sometimes arduous task of page creation is what it's all about and GoLive 6.0 has oodles of new and improved tools to help you along

Other key features

CREATING A BRAND NEW SITE FROM SCRATCH IS NOW AN EASY TASK THANKS TO THE WIZARD FEATURE

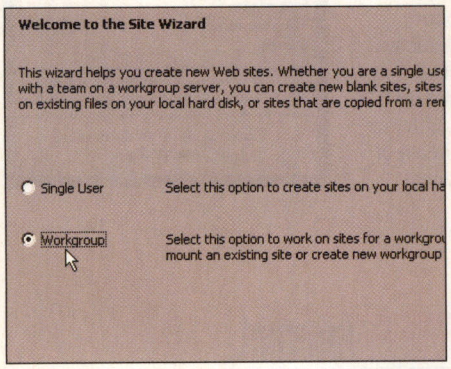
THIS IS A masterful development for GoLive. Using the built-in Wizard, it's now possible to work with a server-based management tool that means files can be checked in and checked out. You can keeps tabs of when new pages are constructed or older ones are modified. It also lessens the chance for pages to be altered without the correct authorisation. This is bound to be a boon for large and complex corporate sites. What's more, it also means that a growing business can expand its site as the need arises and assign new staff members to manage particular specialist areas of the site. Effectively this means that there can be several site content managers, all doing their own thing on corporate pages, allowing continual development and editing of content. Thanks to the Wizard feature, making all of this happen is much easier than you might think. Take a look at our step-by-step guide.





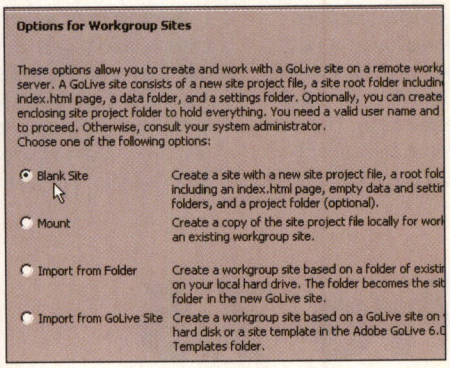
1 Launch GoLive

Start by launching the program. The first port of call after that is the 'File' menu. Here you must navigate down to the 'New Site' option and select it. This will trigger the Wizard feature that will enable you to get started.



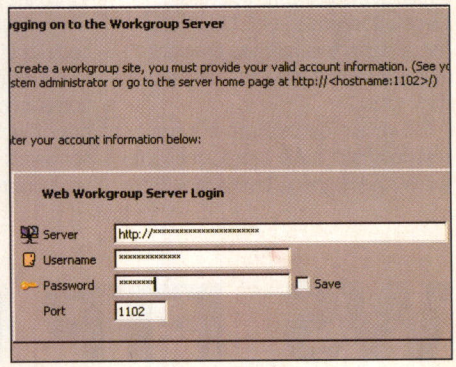
2 Pick your site

The first stage asks you to specify what sort of site you require. If you select the Single User option, you can create a site on your own local hard drive. The Workgroup option, meanwhile, will offer a wealth of extra possibilities.



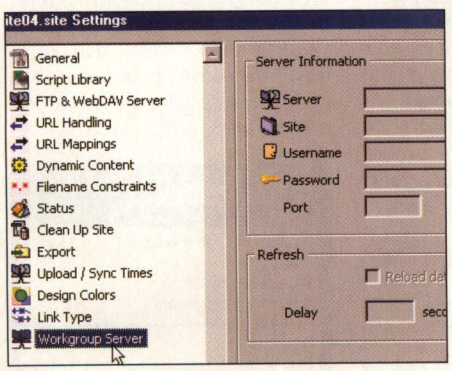
3 Choose your options

The options that you specify here will mean you can create and work with a GoLive site on a remote workgroup server. If you decide to work in this way, you will need a user name and password to proceed.



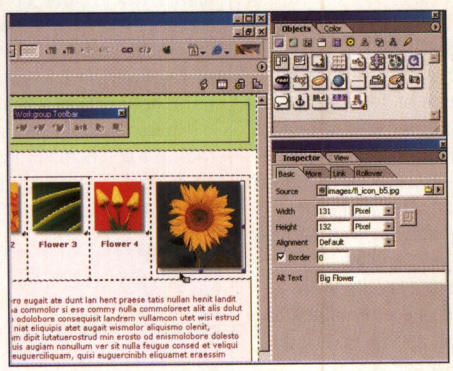
4 Set the settings

This is the stage where we need to specify our workgroup settings. In order to create a Workgroup site, you must provide valid account information. You need to type in the Server details, plus your user name and password as shown.



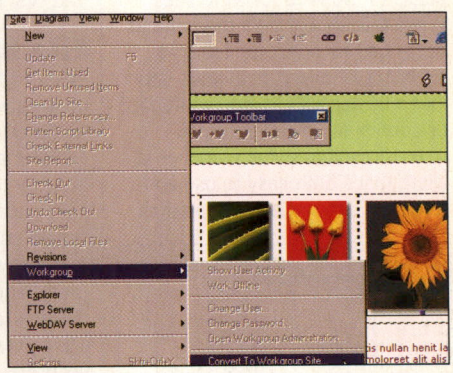
5 Get connected

The software will now attempt to connect to the account specified. After making the connection to your server, you will then be able to build your site on a remote server and maintain it directly from wherever you happen to be located.



6 Up and running

You can now edit and maintain a site from wherever you are. Page elements can be updated and even whole layouts can be revised. Fellow employees can also access the site as long as they have a relevant password and username.

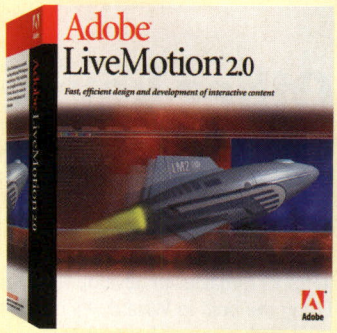


7 Converting to Workgroup

GoLive 6.0 also offers you the option of changing a local site into a Workgroup affair, by simply selecting this choice from the Site menu. Extra features like this means the latest version offers considerable improvements in flexibility.

LiveMotion 2.0

DAZZLE THE PUNTERS BY PRODUCING SLICK INTERACTIVE CONTENT FOR YOUR SITE WITH ADOBE'S IMPRESSIVE ANIMATION PACKAGE



CLEARLY STRESSING ITS intent to go head-to-head with Macromedia's recently released Flash MX, Adobe has timed the release of LiveMotion 2 to coincide with new versions of GoLive and Photoshop.

Like Flash, the software allows you to knock together Web-ready animations to add a welcome touch of dynamism and interactivity to your pages. Traditionally, the two programs have been quite different in their approach. Macromedia's product has always been regarded as more suited to developers building advanced interactive applications in Flash, whereas LiveMotion was the tool of choice for designers wanting to concoct animations and graphics for use on their sites.

However, just as Flash MX has restyled itself to be more accessible for Web designers, LiveMotion 2.0 has hit back by serving up a meatier helping of ActionScript to satisfy those looking to get their hands dirty with advanced Flash animations and eCommerce building. A neat addition to the software is the 'Live Tabs' and pre-made automation scripts that you can use with your compositions without having an intimate knowledge of coding. These help you learn on the job too, as each contains a description of what it does and how to use it.

Interactivity centre

While the ActionScript support may not quite give you the advanced code-level features found in Flash MX, it's still a welcome addition and complements LiveMotion's massive box of Web design tricks. The software's interface and control mechanisms can be picked up pretty quickly and allow you to produce animated content, typographic effects, vector graphics and integrated creativity tools.

The software also provides you with a choice of import and export file formats to give you a greater amount of scope over what you produce and how you produce it. You can choose to create SWF files for viewing in Flash Player or export to QuickTime video. Plus you can import all sorts of media to use within your creations, including over 20 audio formats, all popular image types as well as layered Photoshop and Illustrator files.

If you're truly serious about making Web pages with interactive flair then aside from the more expensive Flash MX, LiveMotion 2.0 is the best in the business. Offering you every tool you could dream of for producing lively animations, graphic elements and text effects, the program is effective and above all, fun to learn. ■

The verdict

Product: LiveMotion 2.0
Price: £175.08
Tel: 0208 6064001
URL: www.adobe.com

Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★½
Value for money:	★★★★½
Overall:	★★★★½

✔ Packed with features for creating awesome animations for the Web

✖ ActionScript capabilities not as advanced as Flash MX

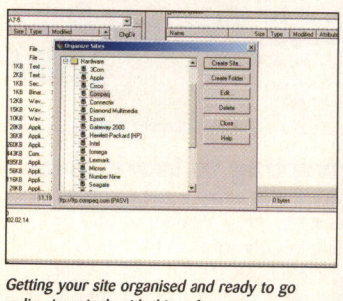
WS_FTP Pro 7.5

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

MOVE YOUR FILES AROUND THE WEB EFFORTLESSLY WITH THIS FULLY-FEATURED, PROFESSIONAL FTP CLIENT

WE ALL KNOW how satisfying it is to complete a site and finally get the chance to upload your glorious pages to the Web for all to see. While this should be a momentous occasion, it's often spoiled by a rubbish FTP client that works you into a fluster with its fiddly interface or confusing upload controls.

As a result, it's vital you choose a client that's both easy to use and reliable. For a while now, Ipswitch has been one of the leading file transfer software merchants, with its market leading WS_FTP Sever and WS_FTP Pro.



Getting your site organised and ready to go online is a cinch with this software

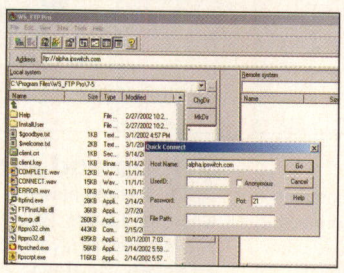
File high club

WS_FTP Pro has always been an impressive piece of software thanks to the winning combination of an Explorer-style interface and an inventory of features longer than an NHS waiting list. This makes it simple enough for beginners to get to grips with, yet contains everything a professional Web designer could need to maintain a site online such as SSL encryption for protecting sensitive data, support for resuming transfers, and browser integration for downloading all files from FTP.

As with any software update worth its salt, Ipswitch has improved the features of the program and made it easier to control the various commands. The redesigned connection process allows you to hook up to the Net more smoothly and the new automatic resume function lets you pick up transfers where you left off if the connection is interrupted.

However, perhaps the most radical transformation is the overall ease in which you can spread your lovely files around the Net, using interactive tutorials and the ultra-simple Upload Wizard..

Whatever your experience of Web design you will at some point need to buy an FTP client and WS_FTP Pro 7.5 will do you no harm whatsoever. In our opinion, it's the most productive way to transfer files over the Web. ■



Speed is the name of the game with WS_FTP Pro and its Quick Connect feature

The verdict

Product: WS_FTP Pro 7.5
Price: £33
Tel: 01638 569600
URL: www.ipswitch.com

Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Value for money:	★★★★½
Overall:	★★★★★

✔ The best FTP client on the go at the moment

✖ Useless if you never transfer files over the Net

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We accept all Major Credit/Debit Cards, Cheques and Postal Orders. No hidden charges

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BUDGET PRO Account 50Mb only £22.99 pa
Budget Pro hosting includes:
FREE Domain Name/Transfer
50 megs web space
Unlimited POP3 email accounts
Webmail Account NEW
Unlimited POP3 email forwarding
10 Sub-Domains Manager NEW
Unlimited POP3 Auto Responders
FrontPage 2000/2002 Extensions NEW
Full CGI and Perl support
11 Pre-installed scripts
Message Board & Chat Room
Choice of 2 Shopping Carts
SSI (Server Side Includes)
No adverts or popups
PHP4 and Multiple MYSQL Databases
File Manager (web FTP) NEW
Control Panel (Cpanel 4)
Graphical Stats NEW
Raw Access Logs
24/7 FTP access from any ISP

from £12.99 per year

www.bargainhost.co.uk

Firekeys 5.51

PROTECT YOUR PC FROM ALL MANNER OF INTERNET THREATS WITH THIS ALL-IN-ONE SECURITY SOLUTIONS

AS TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES, the Net becomes an increasingly dangerous place to spend your time. There are more bugs, viruses and sniping spyware out there than ever before, which is why programs like Firekeys should nestle firmly in your Start menu programs.

You may have noticed that we featured an earlier version in last month's issue, but Firekeys 5.51 is a top tool for turning your PC into some kind of fortress. In short, Firekeys 5.51 is pretty much everything you need to ensure you don't fall foul of Net villains.

One of the major improvements over earlier versions of the program is the inclusion of 'BombDiffusion' technology. The promise here is that, instead of idly waiting on viruses to attack your machine and reacting accordingly, BombDiffusion lets you stay ahead of the game. For your benefit, this effective function is available to you with a couple of mouse clicks – just tick the relevant boxes, and relax in the knowledge that you're safer than ever.

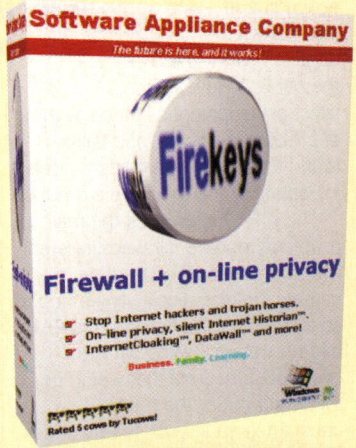
Cloak and dagger

The firewall element in Firekeys 5.51 is remarkably comprehensive, to boot. Along with giving you the ability to prevent hackers gaining access to your system, the program also protects you from the ever-growing threat of spyware attacks. Considering many people are more wary of spyware than any other form of hacking, this is an undoubted boon.

As if all of this wasn't enough, you also get full 'Internet Cloaking', to perform those track-covering functions that you'd normally have to spend ages doing manually. There's also a handy cookie killer, which works on a one-off or daily basis to ensure that you don't leave any tell-tale cookies kicking around on your system. What's more, the DataWall technology in the program claims to be the only feature on the market that prevents any Web-based email client picking up random data from your PC.

Want more features? Okay then – how about a pop-up ad killer? Yup, we know you can pick these up for nowt on download.com and a host of other places, but the fact that it's built into such a comprehensive suite of impressive utilities should fill you with more confidence than a bit of freeware ever could.

In short, if you've ever worried about any aspect of security on your PC, Firekeys 5.51 is your man. We speak the truth when we say it's got everything you need.■



The verdict

Product: Firekeys 5.51
Price: $37.95 (about £26)
Tel: N/A
URL: www.softappco.com

Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★½
Value for money:	★★★★½
Overall:	★★★★½

✔ Astounding range of protective features

✖ You might feel it's taking over your PC

Palm m515

DESPITE BOASTING NUMEROUS IMPROVEMENTS, WILL THE M515 TAKE PALM BACK TO THE TOP ASKS **THOMAS WATSON**?

Techno-geeks are a demanding bunch. The instant you develop something new and revolutionary, they're looking for you to improve on it. Fail to do this, and you'll quickly find yourself about as popular as a C5 at a Clive Sinclair convention.

When Palm launched its m505 PDA, it had every right to expect a rousing reception. With a solid background in the industry and a serious grounding in innovation, the top dogs at Palm wanted the public to love their latest development as much as they did. Alas, they didn't, and Palm found that reputation matters not a jot when people don't like a product.

"THE M515 PUTS PALM BACK NEAR THE TOP OF THE PDA TREE"

The m515 addresses the main problems people felt were inherent with the previous incarnation, namely that the display wasn't up to scratch, and that the supplied RAM had no way of coping with the everyday functions that would be thrown at it. So, the m515 constitutes an answer to any critics of its little brother, and throws in a load of new extras into the bargain.

Critics on display

One of the most common irks with the m505 was the display, which you could hear many PDA experts moaning about. In short, people in the know felt it was just a bit too dark for comfort – you'd find yourself having to squint and move it about to see anything under anything other than perfect lighting. The screen on the m515 is a joy to behold, though, and turns extended personal information sessions from an eye strain into a pleasant aesthetic experience.

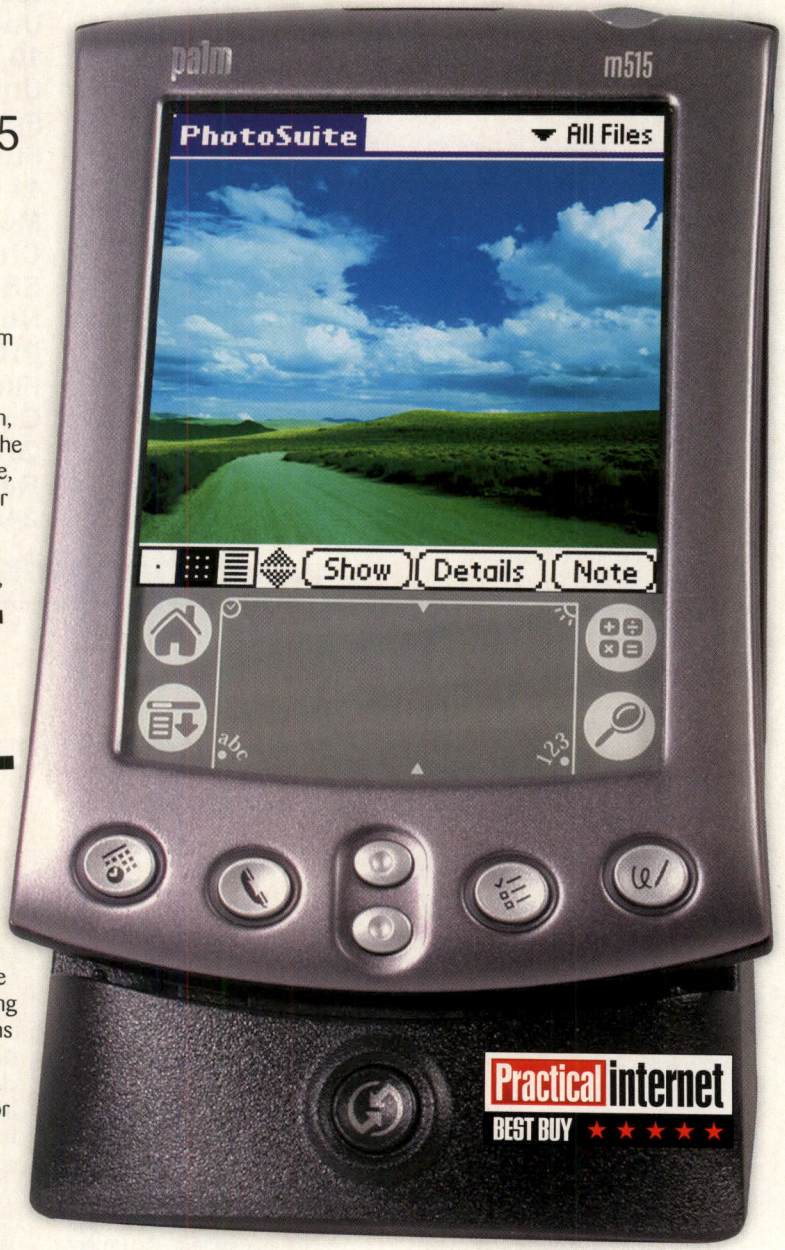
With a 160x160 pixel resolution, the m515 screen competes with the best PDA action currently available, offering as it does a 65,000 colour display. Squeezed into a 55mmx55mm display, the screen features three levels of brightness, although the 'none' setting might be a special option designed solely for Superman. Use the 'high' setting, and every aspect of the display is as clear and crisp as you could hope for. The 'low' option might just be the more advisable setting, however, for using the m515 on high brightness drains the battery quicker than the rarely mentioned battery-eating beast of Blantyre. Have no fears, though, for the standard 'low' setting is bright enough to cope with even more demanding lighting situations. In short, the display of the m515 is far clearer, brighter and sharper than its predecessor, which tended to look quite bleak.

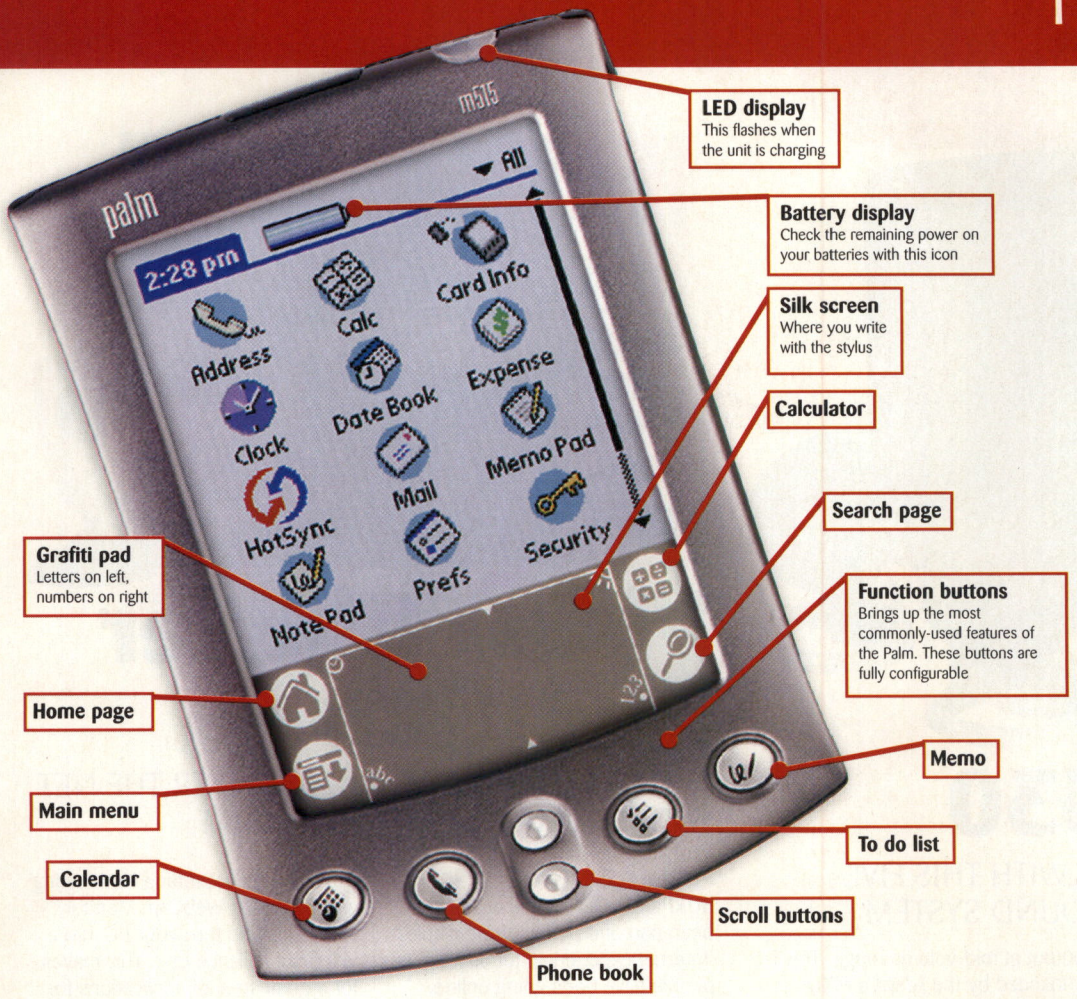
Powered up

While we're on the subject, the Palm m515 is powered by a lithium-ion polymer battery. Unless you're a connoisseur of batteries in some way, the name won't really matter to you – all that matters is that the supplied rechargeable battery unit is able to run the m515 for up to a week, as long as you don't insist on running it on high display mode, of course. This is one area where the Palm excels over its PocketPC rivals, which can't even nearly compete with such a timescale.

Powered by the same 33MHz dragonball processor that drives most modern PDAs, the m515 is a sleek and compact number, with slender stats of 114x79x13mm. What's more, weighing in at a minute 139 grams, the m515 certainly doesn't require you to pump iron before an extended session. The size and weight of the Palm help make it one of the most attractive PDAs currently on the market, helped of course by the fact that it's also a damn fine-looking instrument as well.

The m515 also boasts a more hefty helping of RAM than its predecessor. The 16Mb supplied





with the unit is double what you found in previous Palm PDAs, and brings it up to standard with other PDAs around right now. It also makes for a dramatic speed increase, and helps prevent irritating lags after making a selection. You'll also find the newly-refined Palm OS 4.1 installed on-board, designed to offer better security functions and more straightforward data entry facilities. Considering Palm creates the OS that is used on virtually every PDA around, and licenses it out, you shouldn't be surprised to learn that the company ensures its own products carry the latest versions.

Extras, extras

As always, the true guide to the quality of this particular PDA can be seen by the bundled extras that come supplied as standard – and the m515 definitely emerges from this test smelling of roses. For a start, its capability to handle MMC and SD cards means that you can expand on the on-board memory to cope with any tasks you throw at the m515. In effect, these slots allow you to store extra files and applications, something that might prove invaluable six months down the line.

Equally importantly, you'll find an astonishingly handy Palm Universal Connector at the bottom of the m515. While not as well-known as, say, USB, this connector will allow you to connect your Palm to all kinds of additional gadgets. If you find the 'Grafiti' option of data entry irritating, for example, it's through this Universal Connector that you attach a keyboard. Likewise, you can sync your Palm with digital cameras, GPS devices and modems with the help of this connector. As you might expect, the m515 also features full USB support to allow you to synchronise it with your PC or Mac.

As ever, Palm has supplied a good bundle of software with the m515. Documents To Go 4.0 is effectively a cut-down version of Microsoft Office, letting you create and edit Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents while on the move. Palm's Mobile Connectivity Software, rather unsurprisingly, gives you the ability to connect to the Web using your m515 and a mobile phone. It comes equipped with a WAP browser and a load of SMS software.

One of the jewels in Palm's crown is definitely the inclusion of MGI PhotoSuite Mobile Edition. This is basically a truncated version of the PhotoSuite you can buy for your PC, but there's something highly appealing about being able to edit your images in full colour on a small screen while you're gallivanting around places. While we're at it, the m515 also comes supplied with Palm Reader and AvantGo software to let you read e-books and view Internet content respectively. All in all, it's safe to say it's a fairly decent software compendium.

As a response to critics of the earlier m505, the m515 is a highly accomplished PDA. Currently the top-performing Palm device, this is almost guaranteed to offer an impressive range of features and functions. One of the most important improvements, though, is the development of the screen, which now competes with the best of them, and puts Palm back where it really ought to be – somewhere near the top of the PDA tree. ■

The verdict

Product: Palm m515
Price: £338 (www.clove.co.uk)
Tel: 0118 9278 700
URL: www.palm.com/uk

Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Value for money:	★★★★★
Overall:	★★★★★

✔ Accomplished all-round PDA with impressive battery life

✖ Still underperforms compared to PocketPCs

PDA alternatives

Handspring Treo

www.visor.com

This tiny unit from Visor is one of the finest exponents of combined mobile phone and PDA action. Particularly small, with dimensions similar to a packet of snouts, the Handspring Treo also claims to offer a startling 3-4 week battery life on one charge. In the end, the main problem with this petite bundle of joy is the £600 price tag.

Sony Clie T625C

www.sony.com

While we're all for judging PDAs on their functionality and overall power and grace, the Sony Clie is so impressive on one front that it's difficult to ignore it. Quite simply, the display on this device is streets ahead of that you'd see anywhere else – as good as a PC monitor in crispness, in fact. It won't break the bank either.

Pogo

www.pogo-tech.com

Could this a taste of the future? Combining an MP3 player, wireless browsing, mobile phone access and standard PDA organisation tools, the Pogo is an all-in-one unit that might just take the world by storm. Housed in a sturdy yet highly tasty casing, the Pogo is let down by unreliability issues, and the fact that too many operations involve huge amounts of effort.

Arena-530

GET YOUR PC ROCKING WITH THIS FIVE-SPEAKER SURROUND SOUND SYSTEM

IN THIS AGE where even the most humble of computers can be transformed into a complete home entertainment system, many of us are looking for a way of pumping up the volume.

This stylish set of bins from Labtec lets you experience sonic delights from your machine in 3D surround sound. The set consists of a decent-sized 15W subwoofer and four 4W satellites that can be positioned where you please for a 31-Watt sound fest.

On first impressions the kit certainly looks the part and the swanky compact satellites will compliment any PC. The speakers each come with separate front and back volume controls and rest neatly on space age silver stands. While the wooden subwoofer is slightly ugly, this can be tucked out the way of your line of vision without too many problems.

Sound investment

In terms of sound output, the Arena-530 doesn't fare too badly at all. The bassy sub packs one hell of a punch and has enough power to give your kidneys a fair old battering. The Max-X high excursion driver helps to keep this sound clean while barring any annoying distortion at the same time. Although the four satellites are slightly tinny when turned up to full blast, they combine to deliver an excellent, realistic sound output at mid-volume range. This is enhanced by the Arena's M3D Matrix Surround Sound, which produces an awe-inspiring four-channel effect even if you're only currently blessed with a two channel sound card.

One of the gripes we've experienced with these surround sound speaker systems is that the cables are often a little on the short side. However, we had no such qualms with the Arena system, and the extra long wires allow you to place the speakers pretty much anywhere you choose in the room and they can even be wall mounted, allowing you to experience the ultimate all-around sound spectacular.

Overall, the Arena-530 makes for a great way to enjoy all sorts of multimedia shenanigans on your PC without having to fork out hundreds of pounds to do so. ■

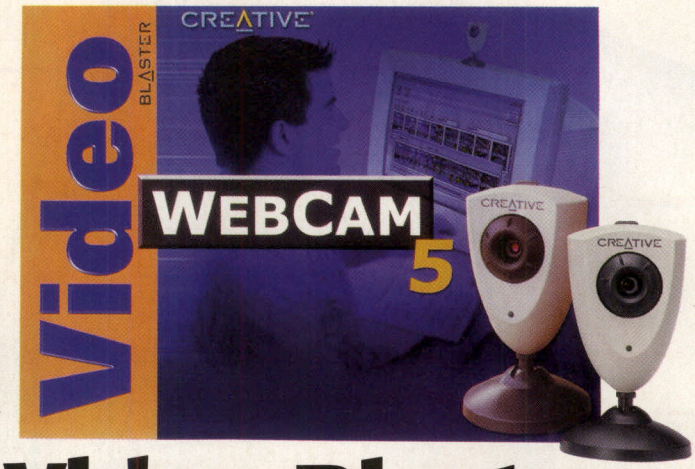
The verdict

Product: Labtec Arena-530
Price: £59.99
Tel: 020 7458 0059
URL: www.labtec.com

Features:	★★★☆☆
Ease of use:	★★★☆☆
Value for money:	★★★★☆
Overall:	★★★☆☆

✔ Reasonably priced with impressive 3D output

✖ Not the greatest performer at high volume



Video Blaster Webcam

PLASTER YOUR UGLY MUG ALL OVER THE NET WITH CREATIVE'S LATEST WEBCAM

PERHAPS SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, Webcams have been part and parcel of the whole 'Internet experience' for as long as people have been going online. After all, who really wants to tie up their precious bandwidth watching someone staring at their computer picking their nose? Of course, Webcams have been exploited for slightly seedier purposes online (we hear) and they're also very useful for conducting live conferences with distant relatives.

Perhaps the biggest mystery of all though, is how little the devices have developed since the early years. Creative's latest Video Blaster aims to break that trend by upping the ante to deliver better image quality than ever before .

Shooting star

Initially, we were pleased to meet the Video Blaster. Small and perfectly formed, the elegant device rested neatly atop our monitor blending in with its new surroundings like a reclusive chameleon. Along with this subtlety, we were also struck by how easy the device was to crank up, thanks to its ubiquitous USB connectivity and simple installation software. This WebCam Control software allows you to effortlessly capture video and still images, adjust settings and organise your output through its Early Learning Centre-style interface.

You also get a whole heap of extra software goodies including the excellent image editor Ulead Photo Express 4, Microsofting NetMeeting and Creative's WebCam Monitor, which lets you turn your PC into a video surveillance unit. This makes for a great suite of applications for newcomers or dab-hands at videoing themselves for the Net.

Video quality you can achieve through the device is also impressive and with the ability to capture up to 30fps it's a lot smoother than than the jerky, grainy results traditionally associated with Webcams. However, in terms of the sharpness of still images taken by the Video Blaster, it still has a long way to go to get near even the most basic digital cameras on the shelves.

With broadband Internet now becoming the new rock and roll, it's increasingly feasible to feed streaming images of yourself prancing around your bedroom to the whole world. If this is what pushes your buttons, then the Video Blaster WebCam 5 is great for getting super-smooth moving images uploaded to the Web. ■

The verdict

Product: Creative Video Blaster WebCam 5
Price: £39.95
Tel: 00 353 1 4333200
URL: www.creative.com

Features:	★★★☆☆
Ease of use:	★★★★☆
Value for money:	★★★★☆
Overall:	★★★★☆

✔ Impressively smooth video output

✖ Image resolution is slightly wanton

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FEATURE RICH, BUSINESS QUALITY WEB HOSTING

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At just £8.99 per month the Fasthosts Personal Account is high in value and high on features. An action packed web hosting account, allowing you to use technologies previously only available to high-end business users, the Personal Account is ideal for hosting your own personal website.

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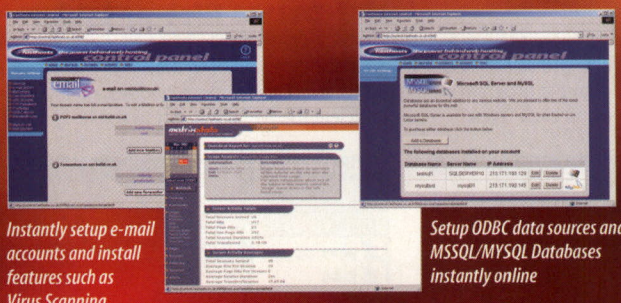
Business Account

The Business Account is the choice of thousands of small businesses wishing to take advantage of Fasthosts innovative features and super-reliable Internet Connectivity. Business Accounts are monitored around the clock to ensure your website is always available.

FREE INSTANT SET UP £19.99 PER MONTH or £199 PA

Both accounts include access to our powerful control panel where you can control everything via the web in real-time.



Instantly setup e-mail accounts and install features such as Virus Scanning

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View real-time information and historical reports about the visitors to your website.

Features

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- Microsoft Frontpage Extensions
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- Private CGI-BIN with execute permissions for each domain
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- Matrix Stats – the most advanced website traffic analysis software providing real-time information about your site visitors
- **New** Microsoft Media Streaming
- E-mail virus protection
- Password protected areas on your site with authentication from a text file or database
- Setup private label control panels for your customers
- Microsoft SQL and MYSQL Databases
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- Control everything via our powerful web based control panel
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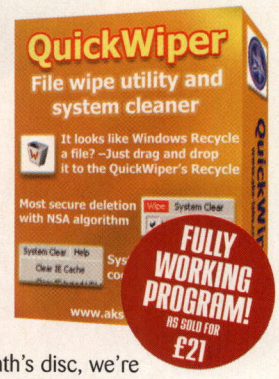
Microsoft CERTIFIED Partner

CD contents

Keep your Net activity private with QuickWiper

REMOVE YOUR INTERNET FILES SECURELY TO ENSURE NO ONE CAN SNOOP IN YOUR PERSONAL DATA



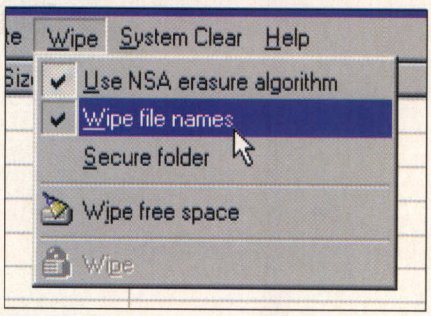
MOST OF US have personal files on our machine that we'd rather didn't find their way into someone else's hands. When disposing of such files, many of us fall into the trap of putting them into the Recycle Bin thinking they will be trashed forever accordingly.

However, in reality these files remain on your hard disk as Windows simply marks their place as free without removing the actual contents of the file. As a result, anyone can come along and recover the data on your machine without too much effort at all.

By putting QuickWiper into action on your machine, you can guarantee that the files you want to remove actually get wiped and more importantly, stay wiped. Because the program integrates naturally with your system, it's simple to use and works in a similar way to the Recycle Bin. As soon as you drop a file onto the QuickWiper icon, it will disappear from the face of the planet for all time.

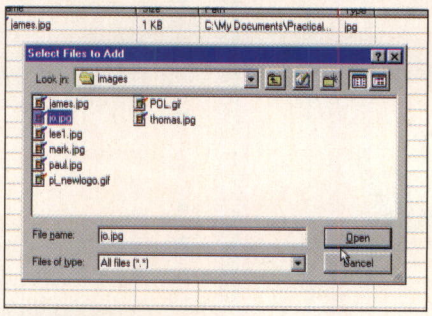
As well as including a fully working version of QuickWiper on this month's disc, we're offering Practical Internet readers the opportunity to upgrade to the Professional version of the software for just $29 (around £20) by visiting **http://www.aks-labs.com/products/practicalinternet.htm**.

Use QuickWiper to erase files



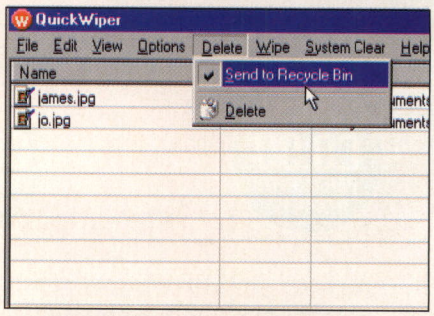
1 Choosing a wipe mode

Click the 'Wipe' menu to set the removal options. The NSA erasure algorithm is the most secure form of wiping, while wiping the file names will ensure the files become unreadable.



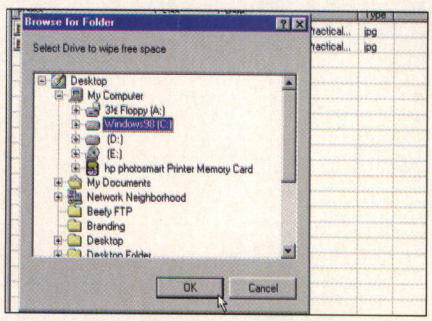
2 Wipe a file

Now add some files you want to wipe to the File list. Use the 'Edit' menu and select 'Add File' or drag and drop a file onto the program's icon. Select the 'Wipe' menu and click 'Wipe'.



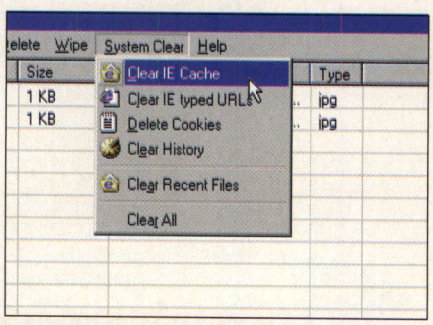
3 Delete files or folders

To delete a file or a folder, use the 'Edit' menu or drag and drop a file into the file list. Select the 'Delete' menu and decide if you want to delete the file or move it to the Recycle Bin.



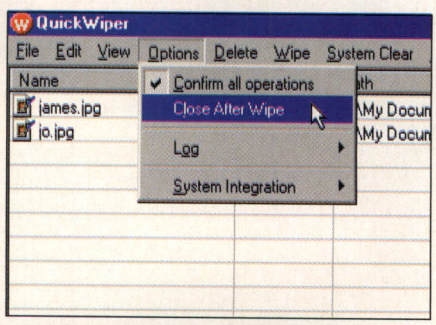
4 Wiping free space

If you wish to wipe any free space from your hard drive, select 'Wipe free space' from the 'Wipe' menu. Now select the drive that you wish to wipe free space from and click 'OK'.



5 Clear your cache

You can remove your IE cache by clicking on 'System Clear' menu and selecting 'Clear IE cache'. You can also delete cookies, clear typed URLs and wipe your History.

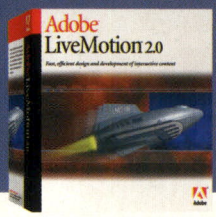


6 Set your preferences

Select the 'Options' menu to alter some of QuickWiper's settings. You can set the program to ask for confirmation before every operation or request it shuts itself down after a wipe.

Try these

→Dreamweaver 4 30-day trial
Macromedia's ever-popular site building application is still worshiped by professional designers everywhere and it's not hard to see why with its awesome range of features.



→ Adobe LiveMotion 30-day trial
If you're serious about making Web pages with interactive flair, LiveMotion 2.0 is the best in the business. Offering you every tool you could dream of for producing lively animations, graphic elements and text effects, the program is a beauty.

→ Flash MX 30-day trial
Improving on its already impressive formula, Macromedia has made Flash MX far more intuitive through an improved interface and has included lots more time-saving elements specifically for Web designers.

Web Protector 2

FULLY WORKING PROGRAM! AS SOLD FOR £68

GUARD YOUR SITE'S CONTENT WITH THIS EXCELLENT ENCRYPTION UTILITY

AFTER SPENDING ALL your waking hours putting together an impressive Web site, there can be nothing worse than to see your dazzling, original content springing up on another site.

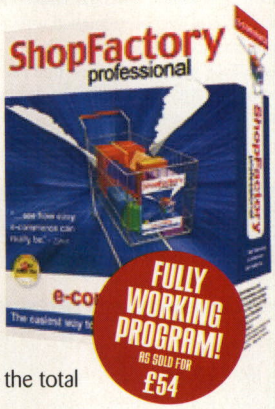
Make no bones about it, thieves are at work on the Net and given the opportunity, a lazy Web designer wouldn't think twice about helping themselves to content from your pages. Web site plagiarism is a problem that's unlikely to ever disappear, but there are measures you can take to ensure that these unimaginative site-building dullards don't pilfer your handiwork.

Web Protector helps you prevent others from making unauthorised copies of your pages, or indeed, any part of them. The fully-working software protects elements such as HTML code, JavaScript, VBscript, text, links and graphics from being stolen. By applying up to six different encryption schemes to your Web pages, the program makes it impossible to read your source code. Plus, you can use Web Protector to disable the right-click context menu in order to prevent images being saved from your site. Other options include the ability to outlaw page printing, offline use, links display and the Image Toolbar in IE6.

In order to upgrade to the fully working version of Web Protector you will need to click on the 'Register' icon in the toolbar and enter the registration name of '**Practical Internet**' and the registration code '**2WH72D23HW2RGOOPCW3RE9**'. For more details on using the program, see our tutorial on page 68-69.

ShopFactory eFlash

SET UP SHOP ON THE WEB WITH THE AID OF THIS FULLY WORKING SOFTWARE



IF YOU'VE EVER toyed with the idea of selling your wares on the Net but never had the time, ShopFactory is a great place to start building your venture. Through its simple, point-and-click interface you can put together impressive shopping carts for the Web.

No programming skills are required and virtually anything can be achieved by point and click commands through a series of Wizards. You can easily define as many tax and shipping regions to allow the shop to automatically calculate the total costs for your customers.

Whatever type of store you want to create, ShopFactory gives you the power to fashion 'one product page' shops, image-based outlets and comprehensive sites with product options, order numbers and extra charges for options.

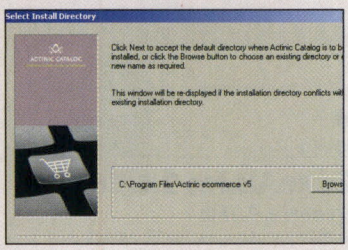
As an added bonus, *Practical Internet* is offering you the chance to upgrade to ShopFactory Pro for the special offer price of £159.99. To take advantage of this great deal, contact Softwair Publishing at **www.softwair.co.uk** or phone **08705 275186.**

Build a store with Actinic

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL online business needn't involve masses of technical expertise as long as you have a decent piece of software.

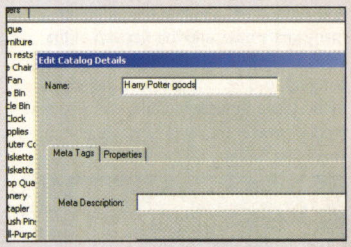
Actinic Catalog comes with everything you need to design, build and run an eCommerce store for selling direct to Net users. The application's easy-to-use design themes give you an attractive selection of styles or you can create your own custom design. Once up and running, orders are downloaded securely to be processed and invoiced and you can also quickly generate reports for stock monitoring, back order management and shipping.

The full version of Actinic Catalog is available for £349 and further details can be found at **www.actinic.co.uk.**



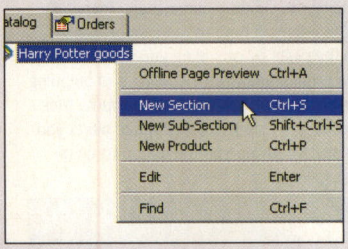
1 Start Actinic

Install and run the program, making sure you tick the option to install MDAC files. Be sure to close all your other applications before beginning the installation procedure.



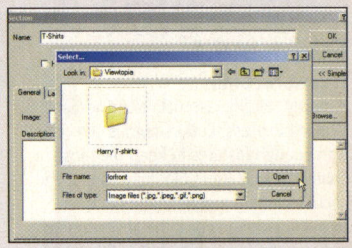
2 Name that site

Now open the program and double-click on the 'Online Catalogue' icon at the top of the site structure tree on the left of the interface. Now give your new catalogue a name.



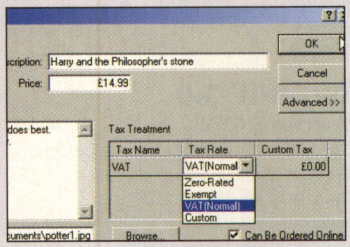
3 Add new sections

Create a new section before you start adding products. Right-click on the catalogue title and choose 'New Section' from the pop-up menu. Give the section a name.



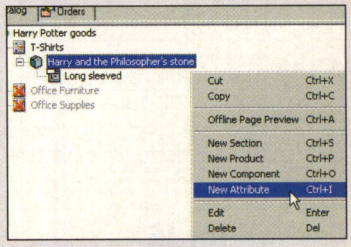
4 Meta tags

Every different section can have its own set of Meta descriptions that can be added by clicking the 'Meta Tags' tab. This window also lets you add pictures by clicking 'Browse'.



5 New products

To apply a new product to the catalogue, right-click in the catalogue window and select 'New Product'. Type a brief description of the product and click 'Browse' to load an image of it.



6 Extra features

To include more details about a particular product, right-click its name in the list and choose 'Add component' from the drop down menu. Now enter the details and click 'OK'.

CD Contents

CD highlights

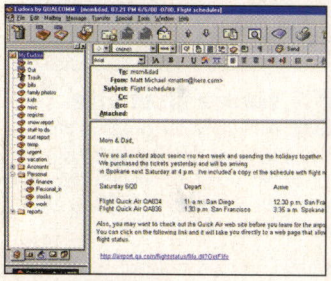
→ Get more from the Web

CRANK UP THESE ESSENTIAL BROWSING UTILITIES AND EXPERIENCE THE VERY BEST THE WEB HAS TO OFFER

RealOne Player

Freeware, 8.5Mb

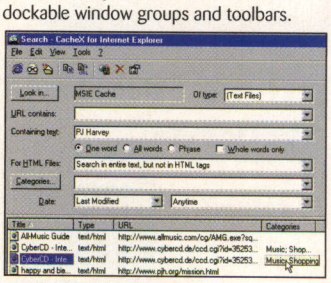
RealPlayer has been blasting out movies and audio on PCs across the globe for many years now, and this version of the veteran player aims to bring the software bang up-to-date. The software includes a media player, music jukebox, and a built-in media browser to play a huge variety of streaming formats on the Web.



Eudora 5.1

Freeware, 6Mb

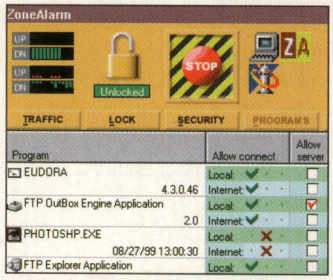
A sturdy, reliable alternative to Microsoft's Outlook Express, Eudora comes stacked with enough features to keep the most chatty of email users blissfully happy. The client includes multiple addressbook formatting options plus the ability to filter, redirect and forward mail. The Qualcomm PureVoice plug-in allows you to witter on to your mates through the power of voice messaging and Eudora's customisable interface lets you move around the dockable window groups and toolbars.



CacheX for IE

Shareware, 382Kb

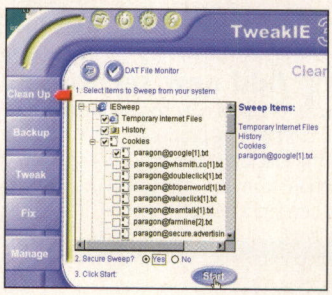
If, heaven forbid, you're still using a pay-as-you-go ISP to deliver the Internet to your home you probably end up speed-reading your favourite Web sites a la Johnny number 5 in *Short Circuit*, in order to curb the amount of time you spend online. This utility allows you to explore and manage your browser cache, giving you easy offline access to all Web pages cached by Internet Explorer. The program boasts a range of decent features including a tree view of the cache by domains, Web sites and even subdirectories.



ZoneAlarm 2.6.362

Freeware, 2.7Mb

In the days when you could safely leave your front door wide open when you went on holiday for a fortnight, computer crime was completely unheard of. Ignoring the fact that computers weren't invented then, this situation has changed drastically to the point where thousands of geeky criminals now get their kicks from raiding Net users' machines via their connection. Thankfully, ZoneAlarm is here to put a stop to these filthy pests by providing you with a firewall to protect you from incoming and outgoing traffic. If an unknown outside source tries to access your PC, the program alerts you instantly, giving you the option to grant access or not.



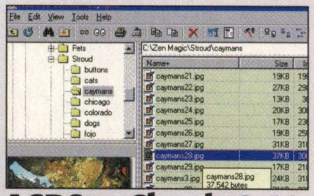
TweakIE 3.0

Shareware, 6.9Mb

When browsing the Web, Internet Explorer can get clogged up with all sorts of unwanted gunk that can affect the performance of the browser. This impressive application removes unnecessary data such as cookies, ActiveX programs and information from every Web site you've visited. TweakIE also lets you backup and restore your Favourites, email and newsgroup messages along with your account settings.

Smarten up your site

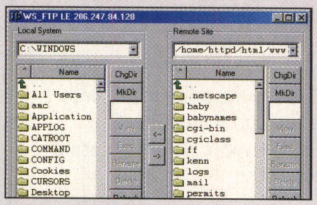
PUT THESE TOOLS INTO ACTION AND CREATE WONDERFUL-LOOKING WEB SITES



ACDSee Classic 2.41

Shareware, 1.5Mb

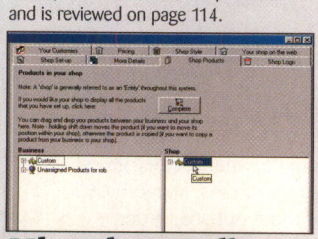
Choosing the right images for your site is essential if you want to illustrate your pages as clearly as possible and this popular viewer lets you quickly display high resolution pictures to suss out the ones you wish to use. The software allows you to view thumbnails in over 30 different image formats and create separate descriptions for each one. Once you've chosen the shots you wish to use on your site you can take advantage of ACDSee's file conversion capabilities and support for cropping and lossless JPEG rotation.



WS_FTP LE

Freeware, 690Kb

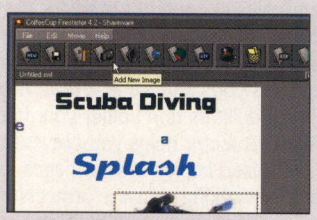
This excellent FTP client lets you upload your pages to the Web with the minimum amount of fuss. Its simple-to-use graphical interface, coupled with an ample sackload of features, make WS_FTP LE probably the best free FTP package on the go. It contains a default transfer mode option in session parameters as well as auto re-get, prompts for file overwrites and preserving file date and time. While this version is available for non-commercial use only, the awesome WS_FTP Pro 7.5 is the perfect choice for the professional and is reviewed on page 114.



Microshop-Online

Trial, 15.31Mb

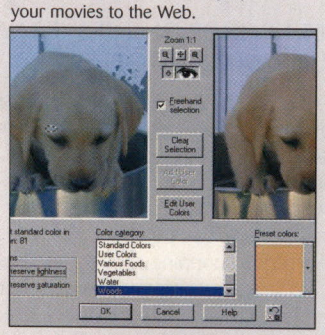
The advent of the Web has meant that businesses that until now, operated out of the boot of a Ford Capri can compete on an even footing with multinational corporations. With a bit of nous and the help of software packages such as Microshop-Online you can set up and run a productive and profitable store on the Web. This program is built to handle a range of product types and services and lets you offer customers a range of different payment options.



CoffeeCup Firestarter 4.5

Shareware, 3.1Mb

Proving that you don't need to be a Flash guru to churn out impressive graphics and animation for your site, Firestarter lets you create complex text and image effects with just a few clicks of the mouse. The program comes with 50 built-in, ready-to-roll effects including Assemble, Explode and Fade plus a meaty collection of funky MP3 sounds. Once you've knocked together your creations in Firestarter you can export them to Flash (SWF) files and use the built-in FTP support to easily upload your movies to the Web.



Paint Shop Pro 7.04

Shareware, 30Mb

Sitting proudly near the top of the image editing Premier League, Paint Shop Pro gives you everything you could ever want to get your pictures ready for use on the Web. The beauty of the application lies in its ease of use, and it comes with a selection of intelligent tools such as a colour balancer, a saturation enhancement filter, red-eye remover and plenty of photo-restoration controls.

On this month's CD

Browsing
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.05
- CDex 1.3
- Cool MP3 Splitter 1.2
- Copernic 2001 5.02
- Download Accelerator 5
- Eudora 5.1
- Internet Explorer 6
- Netscape 6.2
- Outlook Express 5
- RealOne
- Shockwave/Flash Player
- TweakIE
- Winamp 2.79
- WinZip 8.1
- ZoneAlarm

Features
- AdAware 5.71
- FTP Voyager

Full Products
- QuickWiper
- ShopFactory eFlash
- Web Protector

ISP
- Tiscali

Site Building
- ACDSee Classic 2.43
- Actinic Catalog
- BannerShop GIF Animator 4.5
- CoffeeCup Firestarter 4.5
- CoffeeCup Free HTML
- Cool Page 2.7
- Dreamweaver 4
- MicroShop-Online
- MouseOver Button Wizard 2.2
- Note Tab Pro 4.85
- Paint Shop Pro 7.04
- ShopFactory 5.4
- The GIMP
- Traffic Seeker Pro 3.72
- WS_FTP LE
- Flash MX

System Applications
- Common Controls update
- DirectX 8.1
- Visual Basic 5
- Visual Basic 6

Workshops
- Adobe Live Motion 1.0.2
- AudioGalaxy Satellite 0.609
- CacheX 4.51
- Catalog Wizard 2.0
- Crossfading Output for Winamp 1.0
- PaintShop Pro 7.04
- StreamRipper32 2.4a
- TechScheduler
- The Off By One Web Browser 3.2J
- Winamp 2.79

Mac programs

Web Graphics
- Bosco's FotoTrimmer 1.0 (OsX)
- Bosco's FotoTrimmer 1.0
- HyperColor Scheme1.0
- Color Finder
- PhotoSite TimeSaviour 1.4.4

Browsing
- Aladdin StuffIt Lite 6.5
- Netscape 6.2 Full(OSX)
- Interarchy 5.0.1
- Netscape 6.2 Full(PPC)
- Internet Explorer 5
- Shockwave/Flash Player
- Acrobat Reader Web Installer

Site Building
- Dreamweaver 4.01 Updater
- Dreamweaver4
- WebDesign 1.5
- Visual Page 1.1.1

E-business
- ch-ching
- Live data Lite 1.02
- WebMerge 1.9.3
- WebMerge 1.9.3 OSX

How to use this month's free CD

THE MINIMUM RECOMMENDED specification to run the *Practical Internet* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 32Mb RAM, 16 bit colour, Windows 95/98/ME, Intel Pentium or compatible P166. We recommend that all users shut down all other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the start menu, select RUN and then type d:\PracticalInternet.exe (replacing 'd' with the letter of your CD drive) and press 'Return'.

Damaged discs

We will be please to replace any CD that is cracked, scratched or snapped upon purchase. Return them to the following address: Cover Disc Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. If you experience technical problems, not due to physical damage on the CD, please DO NOT return any discs to us unless requested by the support team.

Missing discs

If you have purchased the magazine and have not received your CD, we will be happy to send you out a replacement disc. Email **subs@paragon.co.uk** quoting the magazine and issue number, full postal address and daytime phone number.

Problems using the disc

If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email **cdhelp@paragon.co.uk**. Questions will be answered twice daily.

Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email.

Our helpdesk team will be taking calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone 01202 200259.

NOTE: This service can only deal with problems when installing software from our CDs. Issues surrounding the use and purchase of software and all ISP queries must be referred to the relevant software publisher, merchant or ISP. Please note that we do not support Windows 3.1/ Windows 95/ Windows NT or Windows 2000 operating systems.

The CD logo

Look out for this logo in the magazine. It tells you which of the programs mentioned in features, or explored in tutorials, are on the *Practical Internet* cover CD-ROM.

More choice with UK Online

WITH MORE PEOPLE GOING ONLINE AND THE NUMBER OF ISPs INCREASING DAILY, HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT DECIDING WHICH ONE IS BEST SUITED TO YOUR NEEDS?

Modem speeds:	56K / ISDN 64
Technical Support:	0906 296 5555
URL:	www.ukonline.net
Platforms:	Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000, XP, Mac

Established UK ISP

Launched back in 1994 at the very beginning of the Internet Revolution, UK Online is a well-established UK ISP. It concentrates on providing its members with the best British content found on the Web and it's ideal for families and novice-users because it approaches the Internet in a jargon-free way. So, is UK Online the ideal ISP for you?

Reliable

UK Online gives you one of the most reliable dial-up services to the Internet because it owns its own interconnected switch network. This is essentially like having its own route through the Internet, so as a customer, you won't be competing with other ISPs Internet traffic to surf the Net, which can slow you down. Instead, you'll connect, securely, every time, even at peak times like evenings or weekends.

There will shortly be two packages available and depending on the amount of time you want to spend online, you can choose the most cost-effective one for your needs.

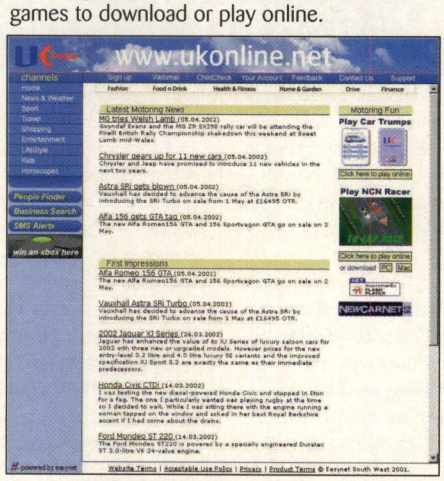
The Pay-as-you-Surf package is free to sign-up; you simply pay local rate call charges for the time you spend online. This package is ideal if you only use the Internet occasionally and at off-peak-rate times of the day.

UK Online will soon launch a new unmetered package, which will also be free to join. There will be a flat rate fee of £15.00 a month enabling you and your family to surf the Net for as long as you want, anytime of the day or night – even at peak-rate times. The flat rate fee means you don't pay call charges and you can easily budget for your Internet spend each month.

So much to explore

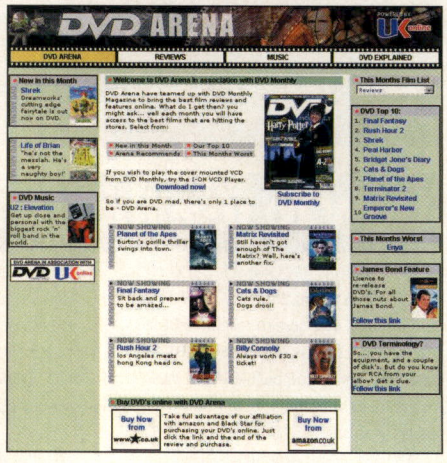
With so much information available on the Internet, UK Online filters it for you and highlights the most relevant, providing some of the best British content out there. It's easy to navigate through its content of the latest news, sport, weather and travel information from the main home page and its various categorised 'Channels'. These Channels lead directly to a wide range of information and approved links to Web sites of interest.

The Lifestyle Channel has information and links covering fashion, food, health, gardening and finance and includes the new Motoring section called 'Drive', which is packed with up to the minute news from the worldwide motoring scene, new car launches, reviews and games to download or play online.



Shopping online is easy using UK Online's dedicated Shopping Channel. Simply follow the links to Britain's top high street etailers for a safe and secure shopping experience.

There's also a Travel Channel and the Kids Channel is full of fun links to games and activities to keep any young surfer busy for hours at a time. The other Channels, including Russell Grant's Horoscopes and the entertainment zone with reviews and tips from DVD Arena, make UK Online the perfect place to introduce yourself to the wonders of the World Wide Web.



Searching the Internet can be a bit like looking for a needle in a haystack. However, at UK Online you can use the hints and tips section for ways to search the Net effectively and use the search box to find what you want quickly and easily.

SMS alerts

If you want to keep up-to-date with all the latest news, current affairs and sport via your mobile phone, sign up to the pre-paid SMS alert

service, where you can order Web-based SMS alerts to your mobile across a range of topical categories. The credit-based pre-paid system allows you to track the number of credits you have remaining and top them up when you want, so you never end up with an unexpected bill at the end of the month.

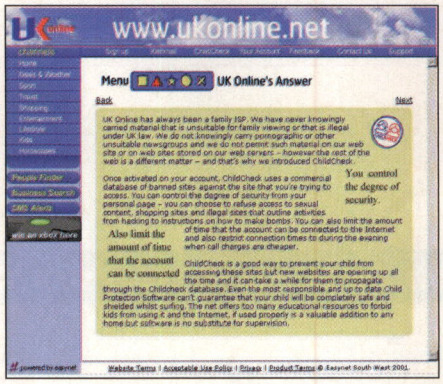
Keep in touch

Every UK Online account comes with five separate Webmail (email) addresses so you can give one to every member of your family. Webmail allows you to collect and send emails from any Internet connected machine in the world, so you don't have to rely on being at your own PC; ideal if you want to keep in touch while on holiday or out and about.

For creative kids or Web design wannabes, each UK Online account also comes with free, unlimited Web space, so you can design and publish your own Web site.

Safety first

UK Online takes safety on the Internet extremely seriously especially as it is a leading family ISP so its always looking for ways to improve safety on the Internet for its customers. CHILDCHECK is UK Online's built in software programme, which enables parents and guardians to activate customisable protection against illicit or pornographic Web sites. With the UK Online family package, each child in the family will be able to have different levels of CHILDCHECK set just for them. Since this programme works alongside a regularly updated list of some 500,000 banned sites; it ensures peace of mind while children are surfing the Internet.



Support for you

Customer support teams are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and you'll always speak to a human being – never an automated service. You can also email any questions to the helpdesk. UK Online's customer service has an excellent track record and this is perhaps one of the reasons why over 25,000 new customers choose UK Online as their ISP each and every month.

Is UK Online for you?

There's never been a better time to try UK Online, so why not check out the free sign-up CD on the front of this magazine and introduce yourself and your family to the Internet.

Life's Hard Enough...

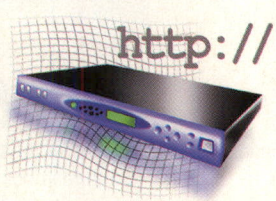
WIN
A SMART CAR
at www.simply.com

...so get ONLINE simply.com

- UK, European and International Domain Name Registrations
- Server Rentals & the market leading e-commerce products
- Powerful Unix web hosting plans for Home, Business and Resellers
- **Provided by the Experienced Professionals**

Simply.com Ltd incorporating SimplyNames.com & SimplyHosting.com

Domain Names ▸▸ **Web Hosting** ▸▸ **Server Rental** ▸▸ **E-commerce**



simply.com

Simply.com Ltd, Malvern Hills Science Park, WR 14 3SZ -UK

www.simply.com

Tel: 0044 (0) 1684 893020 e-mail: sales@simply.com

Get online with Tiscali

AS MOST PEOPLE KNOW, THE INTERNET IS THE GATEWAY TO A WORLD OF MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT, NEWS AND INFORMATION AND PROVIDES A VITAL COMMUNICATION MEDIUM – BUT WHICH INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER OFFERS YOU THE BEST VALUE FOR YOUR TIME ONLINE?

Europe's leading ISP

Over three million people in the UK alone have already chosen Tiscali.

Tiscali recently launched in the UK and its determination to provide the very best Internet service to its customers has already established it as Europe's leading Internet service provider. So, what makes Tiscali so popular?

Fast and reliable

For a start, its members enjoy consistently fast and reliable Internet access with industry research having rated Tiscali amongst the fastest service providers.

Great value packages

Tiscali also offers a wide choice of money-saving Internet call packages to suit everyone, regardless of how much or little you use the Internet. These include Tiscali Classic – a no monthly fees package where you just pay local phone rates for the time you are online.

There's also the all-inclusive packages which let you use the Internet at times that suit you for a fixed monthly fee with no additional call charges.

Find what you want – fast

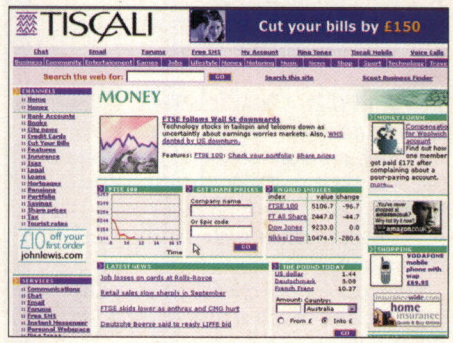
Whichever package you choose to take up, you'll find that Tiscali has been designed to make finding what you want from the Internet as quick and easy as possible. Tiscali has organised its information into fifteen "Channels" such as Entertainment, Motoring, Shopping and Travel - each packed with the latest news, information, offers and links to other relevant Web pages.

You can also get straight to the information you want using the powerful Search feature – and enjoy even greater control with Tiscali's Advanced Search which allows you to filter your options further by date, country, language and more!

Everything you need to communicate!

In the Tiscali Communication Channel you'll find everything you need to communicate over the Internet in one easy-to-use area.

As a member you get five free email addresses and because the email service is



Web-based you can access your email from any Internet connected PC!

Even faster than email, Tiscali's Instant Messenger is the best way to chat online instantly with friends and colleagues over the Internet. Its powerful features let you see at a glance who is online and exchange messages in an instant! You can even send Web page links and attachments to your recipients' desktop, making this a real alternative to email.

Tiscali provides plenty of other ways to communicate over the Net, including discussion forums, chat rooms, even a text messaging service which lets you send up to 10 FREE text messages a day from your PC to any UK mobile phone.

Buyers' guide

A comprehensive resource covering Internet service providers and the very best Net software and hardware. Compare them all at a glance...

Using this guide

BUYING NEW HARDWARE and software for your PC or Mac can be a tricky task. You often have to choose between products which cost the same price and seem to offer identical features. What's more, high street shops encourage you to spend a little more on buying higher spec products than you really need.

This is why *Practical Internet*'s Buyers' Guide is so useful. It's been written with everyday Net users like you in mind and only includes the products and services which we think are genuinely worth buying.

Buy with confidence

The information here is updated every month, but please note that prices and features do sometimes change before we can amend them on these pages – so it's best to check with the supplier before buying.

Look out for our cherished Best Buy logo (below) which is only awarded to the best quality products around.

Practical internet
BEST BUY ★★★★★

Which ISP?

With thousands of ISPs all offering great-looking deals, it's tough to find the right service. This guide helps decide which is best for you

BROADBAND AND ADSL SERVICES

GET SUPER-FAST, ALWAYS-ON NET ACCESS FROM THESE BROADBAND SERVICE PROVIDERS. COSTS SHOWN ARE MONTHLY

NAME AND URL	TYPE	MONTHLY COST	SET-UP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE	NEWSGROUPS	CONTENTION RATIO
Abel Always USB							
http://www.ablealways.co.uk Andrews & Arnold Home 500 off-peak (Self-install)	ADSL	£49.94	£88.13	999	50	Yes	20:1
http://www.aa.nu AppleOnline (consumer)	ADSL	£35.00	£117.50	999	999	Yes	20:1
http://www.appleonline.net blueyonder Broadband Internet	ADSL	£40.00	£150.00	999	25	Yes	20:1
http://www.blueyonder.co.uk BTopenworld home500 (Engineer assisted)	Cable	£33.00	£50.00	15	30	Yes	N/A
http://www.btopenworld.com BTopenworld Home 500 Plug & Go (Self-Install)	ADSL	£29.99	£250.00	10	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.btopenworld.com BTopenworld Business 500 Plug & Go (Self-Install)	ADSL	£29.99	£85.00	10	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.btopenworld.com BTopenworld business500	ADSL	£35.24	£99.88	10	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.btopenworld.com BTopenworld business500PLUS	ADSL	£35.24	£246.75	10	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.btopenworld.com BTopenworld business1000PLUS	ADSL	£93.99	£305.50	10	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.btopenworld.com BTopenworld business2000PLUS	ADSL	£140.99	£305.50	10	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.btopenworld.com BTopenworld Business Satellite 500/1	ADSL	£176.24	£305.50	10	20	Yes	N/A
http://www.btopenworld.com/satellite BTopenworld Business Satellite 500/4	Satellite	£70.49	£1,056.33	20	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.btopenworld.com/satellite CharityDAYS Home ADSL Self-Install	Satellite	£129.24	£1,526.33	100	20	Yes	N/A
http://www.charitydays.net CharityDAYS Donate At Work Professional	ADSL	£27.99	£58.75	999	250	Yes	20:1
http://www.charitydays.net ClaraDSL Solo	ADSL	£58.75	£176.25	999	250	Yes	20:1
http://www.clara.net ClaraDSL 500	ADSL	£49.99	£176.25	999	50	Yes	20:1
http://www.clara.net ClaraDSL 1000	ADSL	£117.50	£305.50	15	80	Yes	50:1
http://www.clara.net	ADSL	£176.25	£305.50	15	80	Yes	20:1

Seven steps to pick your ideal Internet service provider

1 Choose your ISP type

UNMETERED ISPS make a monthly subscription charge, but you are not billed for any Net phone charges.

FREE ISPS don't charge monthly subscription rates, but you pay local phone rates when online.

PAY ISPS make a monthly subscription charge. You also pay local phone rates when online. They are generally faster and more reliable, though.

2 Is FRIACO for me?

FRIACO (or Flat Rate Internet Access Call Origination) is a form of wholesale Net access that costs ISPs 60-80% less than before. FRIACO ISPs are usually more financially stable and reliable than their troubled freephone predecessors.

3 Getting speedy help

If you're new to the Internet, you will make lots of calls to the ISP's telephone helpline – so pick one with low-cost support.

4 Enjoy Net gaming?

If you're a keen online game player, a dedicated fast service provider is absolutely essential. GamesWorld (**www.games-world.net**) is one of several services that supports Quake, for example.

5 No Windows? No probs!

Freeserve, BT Click and Demon work well with Linux, while Mac users should consider Madasafish, Demon, AOL or AbelGratis.

6 Building a Web site?

If you want to build a Web site, check an ISP offers free Web space. Some provide unlimited space (though 10Mb should be ample) while others offer free domain names.

7 Get global email

If your Internet service provider offers a Webmail service you'll be able to access your email from anywhere in the world through a Web browser. This is handy for travellers and business people. Having said that, many travellers get by with a third-party Web mail service like Hotmail, as this also lets you send and receive email via any Net-connected computer around the world.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH www.net4nowt.com
Net4Nowt

NAME AND URL	TYPE	MONTHLY COST	SET-UP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE	NEWSGROUPS	CONTENTION RATIO
ClaraDSL 2000							
http://www.clara.net Demon Express	ADSL	£235.00	£305.50	15	80	Yes	50:1
http://www.demon.net Demon Express Solo (Self-Install)	ADSL	£28.99	£210.00	999	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.demon.net Easynet DSL500	ADSL	£28.99	£50.00	999	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.uk.easynet.net Easynet DSL1000	ADSL	£92.83	£346.63	10	0	Yes	50:1
http://www.uk.easynet.net Easynet DSL2000	ADSL	£116.33	£346.63	10	0	Yes	20:1
http://www.uk.easynet.net Eclipse ADSL Connect 500lite (Self-Install)	ADSL	£139.83	£346.63	10	0	Yes	20:1
http://www.eclipse.net.uk Eclipse Internet (business) 0512Kbps	ADSL	£26.73	£58.75	999	25	Yes	20:1
http://www.eclipse.net.uk Europe Online	ADSL	£72.85	£176.25	999	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.europeonline.com Freedom2Surf Home 512	Satellite	£12.50	£0.00	5	0	Yes	20:1
http://www.freedom2surf.net Freedom2Surf Pure IP 500 (Self-Install)	ADSL	£22.50	£293.75	20	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.freedom2surf.net FreeservePlus Home (Self-Install)	ADSL	£22.50	£70.49	20	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.freeserve.com FreeservePlus Business 512Kbps	ADSL	£29.99	£199.99	999	15	Yes	20:1
http://www.freeserve.com FreeservePlus Business 1Mbps	ADSL	£111.61	£305.50	999	15	Yes	20:1
http://www.freeserve.net FreeservePlus Business 2Mbps	ADSL	£158.61	£305.50	999	15	Yes	20:1
http://www.freeserve.com HomeChoice (consumer)	ADSL	£217.36	£305.50	999	15	Yes	20:1
http://www.homechoice.co.uk Inweb (business) 0512Kbps	ADSL	£20.00	£40.00	999	20	Yes	20:1
http://www.inweb.net.uk Inweb (business) 1Mbps	ADSL	£117.49	£323.13	999	10	Yes	20:1
http://www.inweb.net.uk Inweb (business) 2Mbps	ADSL	£187.99	£323.13	999	10	Yes	50:1
http://www.inweb.net.uk Kingston Karoo RapidTime (Residential)	ADSL	£293.74	£323.13	999	10	Yes	N/A
http://www.kcltd.co.uk Mailbox HomeWire 500 (Self-Install)	ADSL	£39.99	£150.00	999	20	Yes	6:1
http://www.mailbox.net.uk Mailbox Standard Connect 500	ADSL	£34.08	£70.50	10	25	Yes	20:1
http://www.mailbox.net.uk Mailbox BusinessWire 500 (Self-Install)	ADSL	£34.08	£246.75	10	25	Yes	20:1
http://www.mailbox.net.uk netAxis ADSL 500 Single	ADSL	£88.13	£70.50	10	25	Yes	20:1
http://www.netaxis.co.uk Nildram Home500 Lite (Self-Install)	ADSL	£29.32	£58.75	999	10	Yes	20:1
http://www.getadsl.co.uk Nildram Home500A (Self-Install)	ADSL	£25.99	£58.75	999	10	Yes	20:1
http://www.getadsl.co.uk Nildram Home500 (Self-Install)	ADSL	£29.99	£58.75	999	10	Yes	20:1
http://www.getadsl.co.uk NTL	ADSL	£35.99	£58.75	999	10	Yes	20:1
http://www.ntl.co.uk OneTel Unplugged 500 Plug & Play (Self-Install)	Cable	£24.99	£25.00	5	10	Yes	20:1
http://www.onetelbroadband.com PIPEX Xtreme Solo (Self-Install)	ADSL	£27.99	£60.00	1	0	No	20:1
http://www.dsl.pipex.net PIPEX Xtreme Home Office (Self-Install)	ADSL	£23.44	£0.00	12	50	Yes	20:1
http://www.xtreme.pipex.net PIPEX Xtreme Home Office	ADSL	£46.94	£70.50	12	50	Yes	20:1
http://www.dsl.pipex.net PIPEX Xtreme Business 500 (Self-Install)	ADSL	£52.86	£188.00	12	50	Yes	20:1
http://www.xtreme.pipex.net PlusNet ADSL Home	ADSL	£104.58	£70.50	12	50	Yes	20:1
http://www.plus.net PlusNet ADSL Home - Self Install	ADSL	£22.99	£175.00	999	250	Yes	50:1
http://www.plus.net PlusNet ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	ADSL	£22.99	£58.75	999	250	Yes	50:1
http://www.plus.net PlusNet ADSL 1000	ADSL	£64.63	£58.75	999	250	Yes	50:1
http://www.plus.net Realtouch (business)	ADSL	£105.75	£305.50	999	500	Yes	20:1
http://www.realtouch.net Skystorm	Satellite	£411.25	£4,694.13	999	0	Yes	20:1
http://www.skystorm.net Sonnet Internet Professional 500 Self-Install	Satellite	£17.63	£0.00	0	0	No	20:1
http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk Sonnet Internet Office 500 Self-Install	ADSL	£29.38	£70.50	500	100	Yes	N/A
http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk Tiscali (consumer)	ADSL	£76.38	£70.50	500	250	Yes	20:1
http://www.tiscali.co.uk Xantic	ADSL	£29.99	£210.00	999	50	Yes	50:1
http://www.xanticbroadband.com ZenADSL Home (Self-Install)	Satellite	£29.38	£180.95	0	0	No	50:1
http://www.zenadsl.com ZenADSL Single-User 512Kbps	ADSL	£29.99	£58.75	5	50	Yes	20:1
http://www.zenadsl.com ZenADSL Office 500 (Self-Install)	ADSL	£29.99	£176.25	5	50	Yes	20:1
http://www.zenadsl.com	ADSL	£70.50	£58.75	5	50	Yes	20:1

TOP BUYS

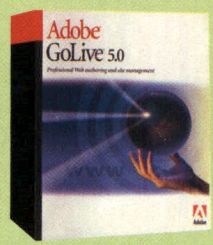
Web site builders

Dreamweaver 4

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

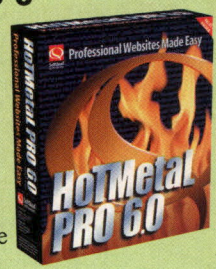
£299+VAT
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Arguably the most solid Web authoring package
What's bad? The price. More than £300 for a copy is likely to deter all but the most serious amateur Web builders
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★★

Adobe GoLive 5



£229
www.adobe.com
What's good? Vastly impressive range of features. Easy to pick up and use from the box.
What's bad? Not cheap. Still unlikely to win over Dreamweaver die-hards
Telephone: 020 8606 4000
Verdict: ★★★★

HoTMetaL Pro 6



£79
www.hotmetalpro.com
What's good? Inexpensive program with expensive-looking features
What's bad? The integration of HTML coding might bamboozle beginners
Telephone: 020 8387 4110
Verdict: ★★★★

Flash 5

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

£299+VAT
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Allows you to create stunning interactive animations. Great for beginners and experts alike
What's bad? Can be somewhat fiddly at first
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★★

Buyers' guide

Which ISP?

TOP BUYS

Web image editors

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

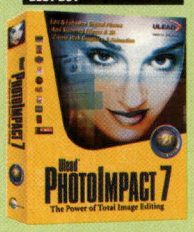
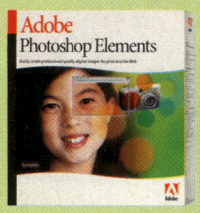


Photo Impact 7

£89
www.ulead.co.uk
What's good? Extremely comprehensive graphics package for the price
What's bad? It's not Photoshop
Email: info@ulead.de
Verdict: ★★★★★

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★



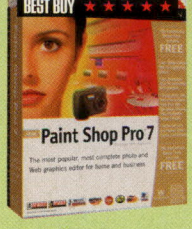
Adobe Photoshop Elements

£79
www.adobe.com
What's good? The greatest graphics program on the go. Cheap too!
What's bad? This is an excellent all-round package suitable for all levels of PC user, but it lacks professional publishing tools
Telephone: 020 8606 4000
Verdict: ★★★★★

Fireworks 4

£139
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Very tasty at helping you make animated GIFs for menus and general Web design
What's bad? It's a tad pricey and overpowering for the beginner
Telephone: 020 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★



JASC Paint Shop Pro 7 AE

£79+VAT
www.digitalworkshop.co.uk
What's good? Cheap, intuitive and easy to use. A dream for those new to the world of graphics
What's bad? Doesn't offer the same depth of features as Adobe's Photoshop
Telephone: 01295 258335
Verdict: ★★★★★

UNMETERED INTERNET PROVIDERS

NEVER SPEND MONEY ON YOUR INTERNET PHONE CALLS AGAIN WITH THESE UNMETERED ISPS. (COSTS ARE MONTHLY)

NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
0800Dial Business Class http://www.0800dial.com	£21.14	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
0800Dial Home User http://www.0800dial.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
0800onlineserve http://www.0800.onlineserve.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Free
123ISP http://www.123isp.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	National Rate
24-7Freecall http://www.24-7freecall.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	National Rate
4theNet Unlimited http://www.4thenet.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Abel DIAL Leisuretime http://www.abel.co.uk	£11.99	No	No	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	Premium - 25p
Affinity http://www.affinity.uk.com/surftime.htm	£25.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
AOL http://www.aol.co.uk	£15.99	No	No	24 Hours	14	Yes	Free
Arsenal AnyTime http://www.arsenal.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Asian Biz HomeTime http://www.asian-biz.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Asian Biz SurfTime Evenings & Weekends http://www.asian-biz.net	£9.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	10	Yes	National Rate
Barclaycard.net http://www.barclaycard.net	£12.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	Premium - 50p
Black Britain - Surf Business Unlimited http://www.blackbritain.co.uk	£11.75	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Black Britain - Surf Unlimited Gold http://www.blackbritain.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
blueyonder SurfUnlimited http://www.blueyonder.co.uk	£12.00	No	No	24 Hours	30	Yes	Premium - 50p
Breathe Unlimited http://www.breathe.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
BT Connect http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	£31.74	No	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	Local Rate
BT Connect Lite http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	£10.69	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	20	Yes	Premium - 50p
BTopenworld Anytime http://www.btopenworld.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
BTopenworld for BT Surf http://www.btopenworld.com	£11.98	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Chalkface Business Unlimited http://www.chalkface.net	£12.91	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Lite http://www.charitydays.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Standard http://www.charitydays.net	£16.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 12 http://www.clara.net	£4.99	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 35 http://www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime AnyTime http://www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime Unlimited http://www.clara.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	18:00 - 02:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	50	Yes	Local Rate
Demon Premier Connect http://www.fast24.co.uk	£15.00	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Fast24 Off Peak http://www.fast24.co.uk	£7.00	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Fasthosts FreeCall Home http://dial.fasthosts.co.uk	£17.61	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	200	Yes	Standard BT
Firenet Anytime Plus http://www.firenet.uk.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Free24-7 http://www.free24-7.net	£7.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	0	Yes	National Rate
Freechariot FC Business Unlimited http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freechariot FC Universal 24/7 http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£16.49	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freechariot FC Unlimited http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freedom2Surf Anytime http://www.freedom2surf.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	Standard BT
Freedom2Surf Unlimited http://www.freedom2surf.net	£96.37	No	Yes	24 Hours	25	Yes	Standard BT
Free-Online Connect Biz http://www.free-online.co.uk	£39.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect BizLite http://www.free-online.co.uk	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Lite http://www.free-online.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Standard http://www.free-online.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
Freeserve Anytime http://www.freeserve.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freeserve HomeTime http://www.freeserve.com	£10.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	15	Yes	Premium - 50p

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
www.net4nowt.com
Net 4 Nowt

NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
Madasafish							
http://www.madasafish.com Metro800 Business Gold	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 25p
http://www.metronet.co.uk Metro800 Business Unlimited	£18.79	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.metronet.co.uk NildramSurftime	£12.91	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.getsurftime.co.uk NildramSurftimePlus	£17.74	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	25	Yes	Standard BT
http://www.getsurftime.co.uk nStream	£43.49	No	Yes	24 Hours	25	Yes	Standard BT
http://www.nstream.co.uk ntlworld	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	25	No	Standard BT
http://www.ntlworld.com OneTel	£5.00	No	No	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - £1.00
http://www.onetel.co.uk OnlineServe Internet Anytime	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.onlineserve.co.uk PlusNet Connect Always On	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Free
http://www.plus.net PlusNet Connect Biz	£99.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.plus.net PlusNet Connect Biz Always On	£39.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.plus.net PlusNet Connect Biz Lite	£119.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.plus.net PlusNet Connect Heavy User	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.plus.net PlusNet Connect Lite User	£29.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.plus.net PlusNet Connect Standard	£8.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.plus.net Powergen Anytime	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.pgen.net Powergen Daytime	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	National Rate
http://www.pgen.net Powergen Evenings & Weekends	£9.99	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	National Rate
http://www.pgen.net Silvermead Unlimited @ Home	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	10	Yes	National Rate
http://www.silvermead.net Silvermead Unlimited @ Work	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.silvermead.net SniffOut DreamTime	£12.91	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.sniffout.net SniffOut PeakTime	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.sniffout.net SniffOut SmartTime	£11.99	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	Yes	Local Rate
http://www.sniffout.net SniffOut TimeOut	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.sniffout.net SupaNet Supahighway	£8.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.supahighway.com SurfAnytime Business Unlimited One	£14.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.surfanytime.co.uk SurfAnytime Gold	£11.75	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Saturday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.surfanytime.co.uk SurfAnytime HomeTime	£15.49	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.surfanytime.co.uk SurfAnytime OffPeak	£4.99	Yes	Yes	12:00 - 17:00	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.surfanytime.co.uk SurfAnytime Silver	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.surfanytime.co.uk Tiny T:Surf Value	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.tinyonline.net TinyT:SurfPlus	£8.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	15	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.tinyonline.net/tsurf Tiscali Anytime	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.tiscali.co.uk Tiscali Daytime	£14.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.tiscali.co.uk Tiscali Offpeak	£9.99	No	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.tiscali.co.uk TotalServe Ultimate Express	£9.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.totalserve.co.uk TotalServe UltimateSurf 24/7	£2.34	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.totalserve.co.uk TotalServe UltimateSurf Day (multi)	£12.97	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.totalserve.co.uk TotalServe UltimateSurf Day (single)	£35.24	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.totalserve.co.uk Totalserve UltimateSurf Lite	£29.37	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.totalserve.co.uk UKStamp Business	£8.22	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.ukstamp.co.uk UKStamp Residential	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Standard BT
http://www.ukstamp.co.uk V21 Standard	£8.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	0	Yes	N/A
http://www.v21.co.uk Virgin.net 24seven	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Premium - £1.00
http://www.virgin.net Vispa Connect Anytime	£13.00	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - £1.00
http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	£14.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	Yes	National Rate

TOP BUYS
Digital cameras

Nikon Coolpix 880
£680
www.nikon.co.uk

What's good? Impressive 3.34 megapixel count. Loads of features. Compact and nice to handle
What's bad? It's not that cheap
Telephone: 0800 230 220
Verdict: ★★★★★

Canon Digital Ixus
£439
www.canon.co.uk

What's good? Small and stylish. Good zoom lens. Excellent image quality
What's bad? Could get lost quite easily
Telephone: 0121 6808062
Verdict: ★★★★

Kodak DX3900
£449
www.kodak.co.uk
What's good? Sits in a handy docking station, making picture transfer a doddle. Menu system is excellent

What's bad? A bit too simplistic and restricted for the money
Telephone: 0870 243 0270
Verdict: ★★★★

Pentax Optio 330
£499
www.pentax.co.uk

What's good? Excellent features and options. Compact and cheap at the price
What's bad? Its bulk can be bothersome.
Telephone: 01753 792792
Verdict: ★★★★★

Buyers' guide

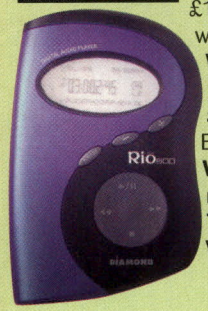
Which ISP?

TOP BUYS

MP3 Players

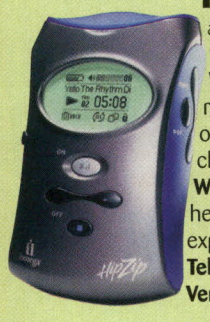
Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Sonic Blue Rio600



£170
www.diamondmm.co.uk
What's good? Several playback modes. Vibrant and pacy sound. Expandable up to 340Mb
What's bad? Only 32Mb memory as standard
Telephone: 01189 444400
Verdict: ★★★★★

Iomega HipZip



£290
www.iomega-europe.com
What's good? Uses removable media instead of flash memory, which is cheaper
What's bad? Bulkier and heavier than the Rio, also expensive
Telephone: 020 7365 9527
Verdict: ★★★★

Smart MP3 Player

£124
www.jedan.co.uk
What's good? Plays both normal and MP3 CDs. Decent sound quality
What's bad? Very odd interface. Not compatible with WMA or supplied with encoding software
Telephone: 020 8668 0016
Verdict: ★★★★

Samsung Yepp YP-NEU

£230
www.yepparty.com
What's good? Looks rather beautiful. Comes supplied with 64Mb of memory
What's bad? Poor sound. Sparse in terms of features. Limited information on the LCD display.
Telephone: 0800 521652
Verdict: ★★★★

PAY ISPs

WANT TO PAY FOR YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER AND BE ASSURED OF TOP QUALITY ACCESS? HERE ARE SOME OF THE BEST...

NAME AND URL	COST	EMAIL	WEB SPACE	SUPPORT COSTS	V90	128K ISDN
Cablenet						
http://www.cablenet.net	£4.95	999	50	Standard BT	Yes	No
Community Internet						
http://www.community.net.uk	£9.69	999	25	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
CompuServe						
http://www.compuserve.co.uk	£7.50	7	Unknown	National Rate	Yes	No
Demon						
http://www.demon.net	£11.75	999	20	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Easynet						
http://www.easynet.co.uk	£11.99	999	999	Local Rate	Yes	No
Force9 Lite						
http://www.force9.co.uk	£4.99	999	250	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Free-Online Lite						
http://www.free-online.co.uk	£4.99	999	250	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Mailbox Internet						
http://www.mailbox.net.uk	£10.00	5	15	National Rate	Yes	No
Netkonect.net						
http://www.netkonect.net	£16.58	999	999	National Rate	Yes	No
Nildram						
http://www.nildram.net	£5.88	999	25	Standard BT	Yes	No
PipexDial						
http://www.dial.pipex.com	£15.00	12	50	National Rate	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Netstart						
http://www.plus.net	£9.99	999	500	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
SAQInternet						
http://www.saqnet.co.uk	£11.25	999	5	National Rate	Yes	Yes
U-NET						
http://www.u-net.net	£12.00	999	25	Local Rate	Yes	Yes

FREE ISP DIRECTORY

YOUR AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SUBSCRIPTION-FREE ISPS WHICH CHARGE ONLY FOR LOCAL CALL PHONE RATES

NAME AND URL	EMAIL	WEB SPACE	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V90	128K ISDN
4TheNet						
http://www.4thenet.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Abel GRATIS Plus						
http://www.abelgratis.co.uk	999	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Ace Internet						
http://www.ace-internet.co.uk	10	5	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Asian Biz						
http://www.asian-biz.net	15	10	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
Barclays Bank						
http://www.barclays.co.uk	5	0	No	National Rate	Yes	No
Barrys World						
http://www.barrysworld.com	999	0	Yes	N/A	Yes	No
blueyonder						
http://www.blueyonder.co.uk/dial	15	30	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes
Breathe Anywhere						
http://www.breathe.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
BT Access						
http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	10	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
BTopenworld Pay-as-you-go						
http://www.btopenworld.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Callnet UK						
http://www.callnetuk.com	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
CharityDAYS Donate At Home Free						
http://www.charitydays.net	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Free						
http://www.charitydays.net	999	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
ClaraNET						
http://www.clara.net	999	10	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Clearsignals						
http://www.clearsignals.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Dizzi						
http://www.dizzi.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Earthlink						
http://www.earthlink.co.uk	999	25	No	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Ecosse						
http://www.ecosse.net	999	999	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
Euphony.net						
http://www.euphony.net	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Fasthosts LoCall						
http://dial.fasthosts.co.uk	999	200	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	No
Firenet						
http://www.firenet.ws	999	999	Yes	Unknown	Yes	No
Fish						
http://www.fish.co.uk	999	0	Unknown	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Free UK						
http://www.freeuk.net	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
Freebeeb						
http://www.beeb.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
Freedom 2 Surf						
http://www.freedom2surf.net	999	25	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes

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NAME AND URL	EMAIL	WEB SPACE	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V.90	128K ISDN
FreeInternet						
http://www.free-internet.co.uk Freeola.net	1	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.freeola.net Free-Online Free	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
http://www.free-online.co.uk Freeserve	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
http://www.freeserve.net FreeUK	999	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.freeuk.co.uk Games-World	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
http://www.games-world.net GayServe	1	10	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
http://www.gayserve.co.uk Genie Internet	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
http://www.genie.co.uk Get Free Internet	1	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.getfreeinternet.co.uk Gioserve	999	5	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.gioserve.net Global Nomad	999	999	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
http://www.globalnomad.co.uk Go There Internet	1	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.gothere.uk.com GoFree	999	999	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
http://www.gofree.co.uk Go-Free	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.gofree.to Go-Legend	5	10	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.go-legend.net HBC21	999	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.hbc21.com Hot-Toast	0	0	No	Unknown	Yes	No
http://www.hot-toast.com IC24	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.ic24.net Icom43	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.icom43.net In2Home	999	15	No	Premium - 75p	Yes	No
http://www.in2home.net/signup IofM.net	5	15	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
http://www.iofm.net Islam Direct	999	999	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.islamdirect.com JMacUnlimited	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.macunlimited.net Madasafish	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
http://www.madasafish.com Ministry of Sound	999	999	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
http://www.ministryofsound.net NASCR	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.nascr.net Natwest.com	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.natwest.com Netscape Online	0	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.netscapeonline.co.uk NHS People	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.nhspeople.net NTL World	5	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.ntlworld.com PlusNet Free	5	10	Yes	Premium - £1.00	Yes	No
http://www.plus.net Silvermead Free @ Home	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
http://www.silvermead.net Sniff Out Classic	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.sniffout.net Supanet Classic	999	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.supanet.com Surf&Save	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.surfandsave.co.uk SurfAnytime	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.surfanytime.co.uk Telinet	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.tellnet.co.uk TescoNet	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
http://www.tesco.net The Mail	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.themail.co.uk Themutual.net	1	50	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
http://www.themutual.net Tiscali Classic	5	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.tiscali.co.uk Totalserve	999	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
http://www.totalserve.co.uk UK Linux	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
http://www.uklinux.net UK Online	999	20	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
http://www.ukonline.net VirginNet	999	999	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
http://www.virgin.net Waitrose.com	5	10	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
http://www.waitrose.com	999	20	Yes	Free	Yes	No

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Webcams

Philips Vesto Pro

£60–70 inc VAT
www.pcstuff.phillips.com
What's good? Attractive little camera, with a good resolution. Natural colour
What's bad? It can be difficult to keep steady because the locking screw sometimes comes loose
Telephone: 0800 8689 4444
Verdict: ★★★★★

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Creative Webcam Go Plus

£129
www.europe.creative.com
What's good? Innovative design. Can be used as a digital camera. Good range of features.
What's bad? Expensive. The digital camera aspect of the Go Plus is a tad gimmicky
Telephone: 01245 265265
Verdict: ★★★★

Sony CMR-PC2

£89.99
www.sony.co.uk
What's good? It's tiny, yet somehow manages to squeeze in the best picture quality we've seen yet
What's bad? It's a little bit fiddly to operate
Telephone: 0800 262 37669
Verdict: ★★★★

Logitech Quickcam Web

£59.99
www.agfa.co.uk
What's good? Get free Web space and streaming with spotlife
What's bad? Average picture quality. TWAIN gremlins got under our skin
Telephone: 020 7309 0127
Verdict: ★★★

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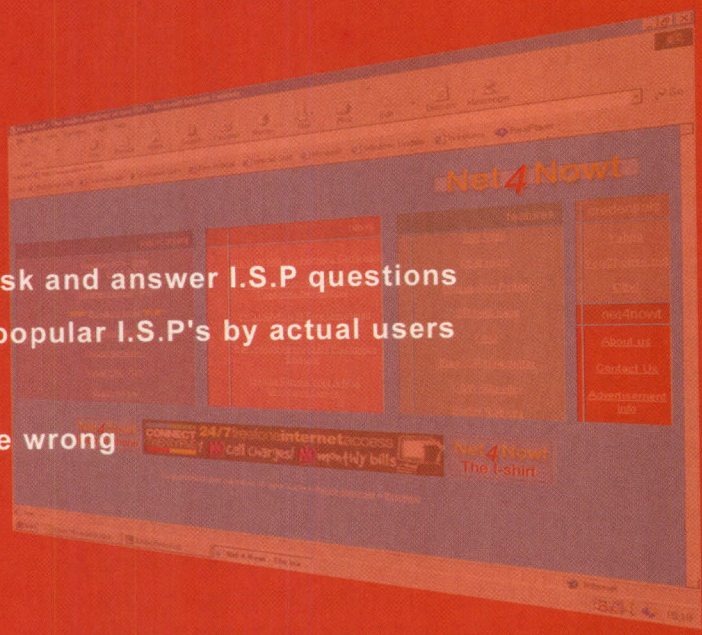

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Issue 57
Always wanted to give ADSL a try but couldn't afford it? We look at how you can get broadbandaccess for £20 and examine some of the best Web innovations.
■ **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 58
Cut out all the pap and head straight for the useful sites with our essential guide to 101 indispensable Web sites. You also get 35 pages of helpful tutorials.
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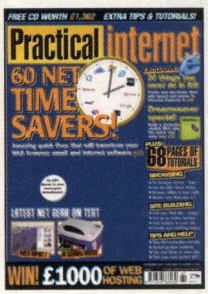

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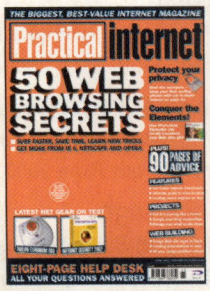

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Issue 66
Thanks to a host of new affordable deals, you could be enjoying a broadband connection in no time. We look at DIY ADSL, and show you how to install it.
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We delve into the Net's underbelly to bring you a glimpse of who's in control. We also look at the top 101 free Net programs, all of which are on the cover CD.
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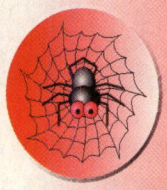

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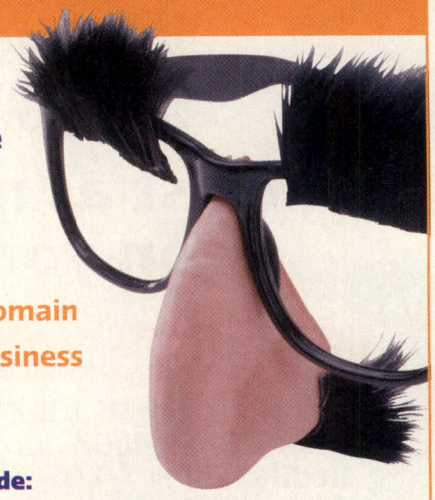

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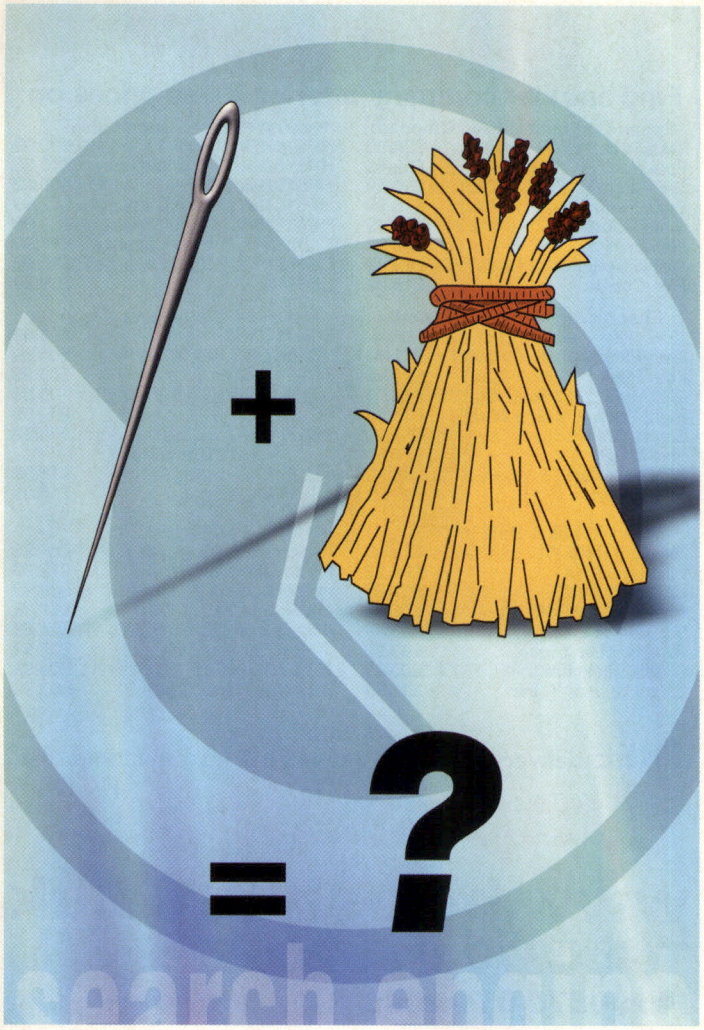

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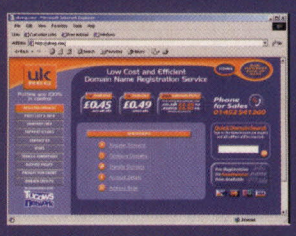

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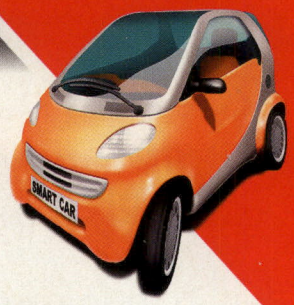

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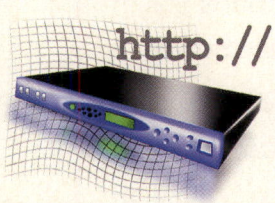

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Shutdown with Jo Cole

ONLY A FOOL would neglect the chance to have a quick dip in the waves of online weirdness. Which is the purpose of this page. Each issue we're going to be taking a look at some of the more bizarre sites on offer. If you have a favourite, email **pixie@paragon.co.uk** and we'll try to feature it

A brave new world

FORGET MEASLY MP3S OR POXY PLUG-INS, USE THE NET FOR SOMETHING USEFUL – TAKING OVER THE WORLD

WHEN TEARS FOR Fears sang 'Everybody wants to rule the world', the synthpop duo hit upon more than just a catchy melody. After all, isn't there a desire ingrained in everyone's soul that causes us to reach beyond the 'norm' and carve a world out in our own image? If you do feel like your ego needs a workout, there are plenty of Web sites offering words of wisdom to anyone keen to exercise world domination.

Tips for the top

HERE'S OUR TOP FIVE TIPS FOR WORLD DOMINATION

1. Get money

You need money at any cost – it doesn't matter how you do it, just get the moolah.

2. Get a hideaway

No one will take you seriously if you operate from a council tower block – you need a hideaway to create evil, preferably a cave.

3. Get an evil stare

Perfect your evil stare and practise it on unsuspecting kids.

4. Get some minions

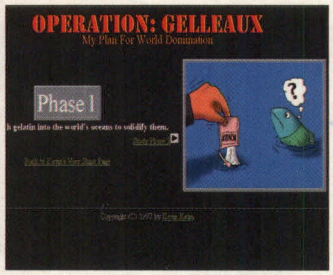
Any world dominator needs some lackeys to do the actual work. Make them as ugly and stupid as possible.

5. Get a cat

You don't really need a cat. We just like them.

The bum deal

The lovely Kevin **(http://triggur.org/plan)** is one man that has his eye on the target. His plan involves fish mining and rectal air fresheners. To get underway, maybe Kevin should have a look at So You Want to Rule the World **(www.stardot.com/~longrich/domination.html)**. There are ten hot tips here from Mister Bad on how to make mankind bend to your every whim. Covering all aspects of domination, there's inspiration galore. And to get you on your way, you can even buy a range of domination packages (starting at $150,000,000).



Can a man really take over the world using fish and rectal air fresheners? Kevin can

Safety in numbers

If the thought of going alone scares you, join a group. Peter has quite an elaborate lair at **www.angelfire.com/il2/worldomination**. His is a Trotskyist Paradise, or a "bureaucratic, totalitarian utopia". But for a really slick operation, have a look at **http://lennon.csufresno.edu/~awc13/domination/default.html**, the home page of the World Domination Corporation. The group claims it hs already started a hostile takeover of Switzerland, mainly because it believes the alpine country's dearth of army knives and clocks will come handy.

The bizarre bazaar

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The Mosque Clock Shop

www.mosqueclockshop.com

No prizes for guessing what's on offer here – there's more mosque clocks than you could throw some sand at. Direct from Dubai, these alarm clocks will gently (not really) wake you up with a rousing 'call to prayer'. They come in four different colours and can grace your boudoir for only £10. Footie fans should delight at the special World Cup edition.

Puff Edz

www.puffedz.com

There's lots of strange and intricate gifts on offer here, perfect for people with unusual tastes (and bottomless wallets). Starting small, treat yourself to some dinosaur vertebrae that are a whacking 150 million years old (£12 each). Human pelvises are up for grabs at £275, or maybe you'd prefer a spine for £175. Geologists will delight at the crystals, while *Jurassic Park* fans might like a Keichosaurus dinosaur fossil from the Triassic age. A steal at £650.

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TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR OWN DATA CENTRE

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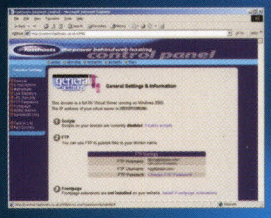
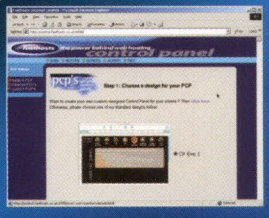


100% Control over your domain names



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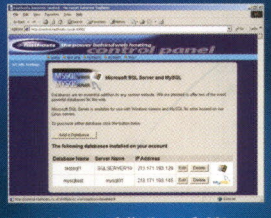

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